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# THE STUDY OF Sacred LITERATURE

Fully STATED and CONSIDERED.

IN A

# DISCOURSE

TO A

## STUDENT in DIVINITY,

At a Foreign UNIVERSITY.

By T. P. S. C. T.

The SECOND EDITION,

Enlarged and Improved by the AUTHOR.

His Studiis ſalubriter & prava corriguntur, & parva nutriuntur, & magna oblectantur Ingenia. Ille huic Doctrinæ inimicus eſt animus, qui vel errando eam neſcit eſſe ſaluberrimam, vel odit ægrotando medicinam. *S. Auguſtinus.*

Auſus equidem ſum ab itinere cæterorum, jamdiu tritu atque uſitato deflectere; aliâque quadam ingredi viâ, quæ mihi viſa ſit magis emergere ex fluctibus Quæſtionum, fortiuſque & ſplendidius ad *Veritatem* contendere. *Sadoletus, Epiſ. ad Eraſ.*

*LONDON,*

Printed for R. BALDWIN at the *Roſe* in *Pater-noſter Row*, MDCCLVIII.

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Ausus equidem sum ab itinere cæterorum, jamdiu tritumque usitato deflectere; aliaque quadam ingredi via, quæ mihi visa sit magis emergere ex fluctibus Quæstionum, fortiusque & splendidius ad Veritatem contendere. Gulielmus, Epist. ad Eph.

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# PREFACE.

*THE following Sheets were originally intended for the private use of a Student in a Religious Order, which makes a particular Profession of Learning. They were, afterwards, thought not unworthy to be offered to the Public; and had the good fortune to meet with a favourable reception, not only from Persons of Knowledge and Discernment of the Church of* Rome, *but likewise from several of candour and impartiality, joined to the greatest abilities, of a different persuasion. And sure, if any thing could entitle the Author to the favour of the Judges and Patrons of Literature, it is the* Subject *he has made choice of. For whether we consider the* Object, *or the* End *the Writer should propose to himself, or the* Character *of the Persons, for whose benefit such a Work is principally undertaken, or the* Authority *on which it must be supported; To draw up an accurate and comprehensive Method of the Study of* Divinity, *must needs ap-*

*pear a Taſk no leſs difficult than important. The* Object, *as it takes in the whole Extent of Chriſtian Knowledge, and the Rules, the Models and Obſervations, from which it is derived, is truly great and univerſal: The* End *propoſed, of giving a true Notion of the moſt ſublime and neceſſary of all Sciences, could not be higher or more beneficial; nor could any Connexion be more intimate and inſeparable than of this Subject, and the Intereſts of Religion, whether they are conſidered as public or perſonal. No* Set of Men *could better deſerve the attention of a Writer, than thoſe for whom theſe Inſtructions are deſigned, the future* Miniſters of the Lord of Hoſts, whoſe Lips are to be the Repoſitory of Knowledge, and from whoſe Mouth the People are to learn the Law *. *The Plan of Studies here laid down reſts on ſuch* Principles, *as few (it is preſumed) will be diſpoſed to conteſt, the* Opinion *of the beſt and greateſt Men, the* Evidence *of Facts, the* Reaſon *of* Things, *and the*

* *Malachi*, ch. 2.

*unerring*

*unerring* Authority *of divine Truth. What Deſign could more worthily engage the Attention and Favour of an Intelligent and well minded Reader than that, whoſe ſalutary and extenſive Tendency is ſo acknowledged? The Author wiſhes his Ability was as equal to the Undertaking, as his Intentions are upright, and his Zeal in the Attempt ſincere. He is ſenſible that a more maſterly Hand, animated by ſo noble an Object, would have drawn forth, to much greater Advantage, the diſtinguiſhing and genuine Lineaments of true* THEOLOGY. *But ſtill he hopes this Draught, imperfect as it is, will ſufficiently trace out to the Student the great Lines of this Science, and be a Direction to him to attain an Excellence beyond the Reach of this rude Sketch. Encouraged by this Proſpect he preſents the Public with a Second Edition, in which a great many Articles, which were but ſlightly touched on in the former, are treated in a Detail, which may be uſeful to Beginners, and entertaining, at leaſt, to the more Advanced. And as the*

*Work now exceeds the Bounds of a Letter, and has taken a larger Compaſs, the Title, under which it firſt appeared, is altered. The Author's Expectations will be fully anſwered, if ſuch as think* right *and mean* well, *are ſatisfied with his Performance*; Et placere quæ bene dicit non ſuo magis quàm eorum nomine delectabitur, qui rectè judicabunt. *Quinctilian.*

CON-

# CONTENTS.

*DESIGN and DIVISION of the Work: all ſacred Literature reduced to the four following Heads, the* Scriptures, *Works of the* Fathers, Church Hiſtory, *and* Theology, page 1.

SECTION I. *In what manner the* Scriptures *are to be ſtudied,* page 2.——*Method of carrying on this Study ſo as to finiſh it with the other Branches of* Divinity, page 3.——*Of the uſe and choice of* Commentators, p. 4.——Menochius *recommended, with the preliminary Diſcourſes of* Bonfrerius, *&c.* p. 6.——*An Account of* Houbigant's *tranſlation of the Bible,* p. 8.——*Of other Authors who expound particular parts of Scripture, or greatly help to underſtand the Whole, as* Boſſuet, Ribera, Sadoletus, Cornelius Janſenius, Locke, *&c.* p. 9. *&c.* ——Bellarmine's *Diſſertation on the Authority of the Vulgate,* p. 15.——*The Reſult of the Study of* Scripture, *as here propoſed,* p. 16.——*Character of the ſacred Writings,* ibid.——*Sentiment of* Sulpitius Severus *and*

Lactantius *on this Subject*, p. 17.——*Excellence of the ſaid Writings above all others*, p. 19.——*The peculiar Inſtructions of each Book of the* Scriptures, p. 21. *&c.*——*Diſpoſitions required to read them with Profit, treated in a detail which the importance of the Subject juſtifies, and with which the firſt Section concludes*, p. 25. *&c.*

SECTION II. *The Writings of the* Fathers *hold the next rank to the* Scriptures, p. 31.——*The choice with which a Student in* Divinity *is to read them*, ibid.——*Inſtances of their uſe in Theological Studies from the Works of St.* Leo, Gregory of Nazianzen, *&c.* p. 33.——*Various Excellence of theſe Writers in every kind of Eloquence*, p. 34.—*exemplified in St.* Baſil, Athanaſius, Auſtin, p. 35.—*in St.* Cyprian, Paulinus, Leo, Gregory, Bernard, p. 37.—*The* Fathers, *in general, inſiſt moſt on the moral ſenſe of the Scriptures*, p. 38.—*Their Works not exempt from blemiſhes*, p. 39.—*on falſe delicacy*, ibid.—*The diſreſpectful and undeſerved treatment the* Fathers *have met with from ſome Writers*, p. 40.—*A ſhort*

*Digreſſion*

*Digreſſion on the late Lord* Bolingbroke, p. 41.—*Other Writers, which make the* ſecond Claſs *of the* Fathers, Vincent of Lerins, Minucius, Lactantius, *uſeful to Theology*, ibid.—*Polite Learning cultivated by the* Fathers, p. 42.—Caſſian's *and* Ros-weide's *Collections*, p. 43.—*St.* Chryſoſtome, *on Prieſthood*; *and a Work*, on reading the Holy Fathers, p. 44.—*The Works of pious and learned Men of all Ages, a natural* Appendix *to the Works of the* Fathers; *ſome of the former ſingled out*, Alphonſus Rodriguez, Bellarmine, *&c.* ibid. *&c.*——*Why a ſmall number only recommended*; *and the advantages of confining our reading of this kind, to a few but well choſen Authors*, p. 47.——*the fore-mentioned remark exemplified in ſome of the greateſt Perſonages, ancient and modern*, p. 48.

SECTION III. Church-Hiſtory, *the* third *branch of Eccleſiaſtical Learning. The order to be obſerved in it*, p. 49.---Tillemont, Fleury, Calmet, Salianus, Cabaſſutius, Berruyer, Spondanus, Sulpitius Severus *recommended*; *and their different Characters*

*ſet*

*ſet forth*, p. 50. *&c.*---Boſſuet's *Diſcourſe on Univerſal Hiſtory*, p. 54.---*the grand Object of the general Hiſtory of the Church conſidered*, p. 56, *&c.*---*The Works already mentioned regard the general Hiſtory of the Church.* Alford's *Annals contain that of our own Nation*, p. 59.---*Some other Works of* Boſſuet, Sanders, Spelman, Bede, *treat of the ſame Subject*, p. 60.---*The Hiſtory of* Religious Orders, *in general*, p. 61. *&c.* ---*Introduction to what is to be ſaid of* the Society of Jeſus, p. 64.---*An account of that Body from* Morin, Cardinal Allen, *and Lord* Bacon, p. 65. *&c.*---*Works which treat of Church Writers; Uſe of ſuch Works*, p. 69.---*The End a Student is to propoſe to himſelf in* Church Hiſtory, p. 70.---*The* Lives *of the* Saints, *a diſtinguiſhed part of this Study. Several of them inſtanced, and their peculiar Character given*, p. 72. *&c.* ---*In what manner theſe are to be read in order to profit from them*, 74.

SECTION IV. Divinity, *the* fourth *and laſt branch of ſacred Science. The grand miſtake in this Study made on firſt ſetting out*,

*out*, p. 75.---*In what light we are to conſider Divinity Lectures*, p. 77.---*How the deficiency of theſe Lectures may be compenſated*, ibid, *and* p. 78, *and* 79.---*Concerning the choice of Authors who write on this Subject*, p. 80.---*The various fate of School-Divinity: Character of St.* Thomas *of* Aquin; *and degeneracy of School Learning after his time, till the revival of Letters*, p. 81, *&c.* ---*The Divines of the* Society of Jeſus, p. 86.---*for what reaſon particularly recommended to the Student, for whoſe uſe this Inſtruction was chiefly deſigned*, ibid.---*The ancient and modern Method of teaching* Divinity *conſidered*, p. 89.---*Excellence to be expected only from an union of both*, p. 90. ---Petavius *propoſed as a Pattern of this Excellence*, p. 91.---*Enumeration of the different parts which make up* School Divinity, p. 92.---*the Character of* Petavius *reſumed*, p. 94.---*His Theological Works incomplete*, p. 98.---*This deficiency may be ſupplied by thoſe of* Leſſius, *who is propoſed as a ſecond Model of Excellence in this Science: Character of his Perſon and Works: eſteem in which Sir* Walter Raleigh *held*

*ſome of them*, ibid, *and* p. 99.---Du Hamel's *and* Tournely's *Bodies of Divinity*, p. 101.---*The Advantages of ſtudying* Divinity *on the Plan here propoſed*, p. 102.---Leſſius's *ſentiment on this Subject*, p. 104.---*The Inconveniencies which have attended a contrary way of proceeding in this Science*, p. 107.---*A Caution drawn from a Reflexion of* Ariſtotle, p. 109.---*The Conſequences of neglecting this Caution*, p. 110.---Caſuiſtry, *an Appendix to* Theology; *ſome Writers on it, recommended*, p. 112.----The Canon Law; *in what acceptation it belongs to* Divinity, p. 113.---Controverſy, *another Appendix to the ſame Science: Writers who treat of it: to what Subjects it ſhould be confined. The Submiſſion due to the Civil Power from Perſons under Oppreſſion*, p. 114, *&c.*---*Of ſome Works which take in the whole Circle of ſacred Science*; Mabillon, Vivez, Bacon, Canus, p. 119.---*The great Uſefulneſs of ſuch Works*, p. 122.----*The chief Qualifications required in a Profeſſor of Divinity*, p. 124.---*the advantages of a polite and liberal Method in theſe Studies inforced from* Sadoletus, Muretus, *and* Vivez,

vez, p. 125.---*An important Article concerning* Divinity Lectures *and* Diſputations, *treated at large, and with Accuracy. An abſtract of the method obſerved by* Maldonatus *in giving theſe Lectures*, p. 127, *&c.* ---*The Plan of Studies propoſed in this Diſcourſe, very practicable*, p. 137.---*the Advantages of various and extenſive Acquaintance with the Works of the Learned*, p. 139.---*Under what Limitations this is to be underſtood*, p. 141, *&c.*---*The time which a Student may allot to polite Learning during his Theological Studies*, p. 144.---*the Advantages of this kind of Literature: Some Works, which greatly contribute to form and perfect true Taſte*, ibid, *&c.*---*A Caution to the Student to be temperate in theſe Studies*, p. 147.---*Great Care ſhould be taken to be correct in our native Language*, p. 148. ---*This Care neceſſary, in a particular manner, to all thoſe who are to be charged with the Inſtruction of others*, ibid.---*Serious and important Reflexions on reading Authors who endanger either Principles or Morals: Review of the Works of Lord* Shafteſbury, *Dr.* Middleton, *and Lord* Bolingbroke:

*in*

*in what manner they have been answered by* Dr. Brown, *Mr.* Walton, *and Dr.* Warburton, p. 150, *&c.*----Rochefoucaud's *Moral Reflexions taken into consideration*, p. 154.---*A general Caution concerning exceptionable Writers*, p. 159.---

CONCLUSION. *The* first *and principal* Motive *of the Author in tracing this Plan, was, to give a right notion of Theological Studies*, p. 161.---Another *motive; to recapitulate, for his own private Benefit, the several Heads of sacred Knowledge*, p. 163. ---A third, *to testify his Gratitude to those, whom he owes his Education*, p. 164.---*A* fourth, *to make these Studies appear not to Clergymen alone, but likewise to the Layity of both Sexes, as pleasant as they are beneficial: on which occasion the Ladies and Gentlemen of* England *are particularly addressed*, ibid, *&c.*---*The Author's Reasons for departing sometimes from the usual Methods of the Schools*, p. 170.---*The Novelty of the Subject, was a* fifth *Motive which induced him to undertake it*, p. 171, *&c.*---*The great Benefits of a studious Disposition in Clergymen*,

*Clergymen*, p. 172.---*Under what Reſtrictions this turn of Mind is to be kept*, p. 175.---*An enumeration of the fore-mentioned Benefits reſumed*, p. 178.---*A perſonal Application to the Student*, p. 180.---*The chief Failings incident to the Learned, and the good Qualities, which principally adorn that Character. As this Article is of the higheſt Importance, no care has been wanting to place it in its trueſt and moſt uſeful Light*, p. 180, &c.---*Recapitulation of the whole Syſtem of Theological Studies: the Connexion of all its Parts: the End of all Improvement, virtuous and religious Practice, and the Love of God*, p. 195, &c. *to the End of the Diſcourſe.*

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# A DISCOURSE ON THE STUDY, &c.

ALL the Learning peculiarly neceſſary and proper to a Chriſtian, eſpecially to one who deſigns himſelf for Holy Orders, is compriſed under the four following Heads, the *Holy Scriptures*, the *Works of the Fathers*, *Church Hiſtory*, and *Divinity*. Under the Head of the *Works of the Fathers*, the Writings of learned and pious Men of every Age of the Church are juſtly ranked; as the Lives of holy Perſonages are one of the faireſt Portions of *Church Hiſtory*. *Divinity*, eſpecially that which is diſtinguiſhed by the Name of *Poſitive*, is little more than a Science reſulting from the three former Heads, reduced to art and me-

thod; and that which is termed *Speculative*, is nothing but Reaſonings, Deductions and Concluſions, drawn from the ſame Heads, particularly from the *Scriptures*. This I take to be a juſt and adequate Notion of *Eccleſiaſtical Learning*. A Student in *Divinity* ſhould make this his firſt Object; and ſhould keep it conſtantly in View during the whole courſe of his Studies. And thus, as *Ariſtotle* has obſerved, * *The perfect Knowledge of any thing conſiſts in being acquainted with the cauſes in which it is contained.*

I SHALL begin with the *Scriptures*. The beſt way of ſtudying them, is to be very converſant, not with Commentators, but the Text. Read it from the beginning to the end, without the help of any Expoſitor: Attention and Aſſiduity will ſupply the want of a Commentary. On the ſecond reading, a great part of the Difficulties which occurred in the firſt, will diſappear; a third reading will clear up more; and the oftner you read it, the better you will underſtand not only the Literal but the Spiritual Senſe of it. Be-

* Met. I. ch. 3. & 1. Poſt. c. 2.

ſides

ſides attending the public Lecture, you ſhould give half an hour a day to this Study: its dignity and importance require it ſhould be conſidered as the chief Branch of *Divinity*; And I am ſorry it does not always ſeem to have that Time and Attention allotted in ſome Colleges and Univerſities, which it deſerves, and which might well be ſpared from Occupations, by no means comparable to this.——I ſhould deſire that the Study of the *Scriptures* might be put on ſuch a footing as to have them all read and explained within four years. By this Method all the Students in *Divinity* would become acquainted with them, and carry on this with their other Studies. But when this Lecture is appointed at ſuch an hour that it cannot fail of being frequently omitted; or is given in ſuch a manner, that a great deal of time is employed in explaining very little of the *Scripture*, every prudent Perſon muſt perceive how ſhort of the Mark ſuch Aims muſt be.——The *Hiſtorical Books* of the *Old Teſtament*, with thoſe of *Wiſdom*, might be read and explained the firſt year; the *Prophets*, the ſecond; the *Goſpels*, the *Acts*, and the *Apo-*

*calypſe*, the third; and the *Epiſtles*, the fourth. As this Diviſion ſeems very practicable and eaſy, I have ventured to propoſe it. I think all the *Divines* ſhould be preſent at this Lecture, and be inſtructed to look on it as the moſt delightful and uſeful part of Theological Studies; the *Scriptures* being, as St. *Hierom* moſt truly ſays of them, † *The Summary and Abridgment of all Theology.*—— After this ſhort, and, perhaps, impertinent Remark on the publick Method of teaching the *Scriptures*, I am going back to thoſe Reflexions which may be ſerviceable to you in your private Studies.—— When you have read, as I ſaid, the Text of the Scriptures twice or thrice from the beginning to the end, it will be expedient to gather from the Writings of others thoſe Lights, with which your own Underſtanding, aſſiſted by the Holy Spirit, does not furniſh you. For we ought, firſt, to exert our own Faculties, and, then, call in Succour, not to favour our Lazineſs, but relieve our Wants. The Produce of our own Stock will always be more laſting, as well as pleaſant and advantageous, than any thing

† Breviarium & Compendium totius Theologiæ.

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we can borrow from others. Now a few Commentators ſuffice, if they are well choſen and well digeſted. I ſhould diſſuade you from undertaking to read many, or thoſe who are very voluminous; the Senſe and Spirit of the Text is loſt in the Explication. The Comment appears like a wide Ocean, in which the Author is ſunk and ſcarce raiſes his Head ‡. Beſides, ſuch Works are always full of things foreign to the Meaning of the Text, and, however fraught with Erudition, or even Piety, cannot but diſpleaſe a judicious Reader, who can approve of nothing but what is in its proper place.——§ Thoſe Authors

‡ Quis enimvero non cohorreſcit, commovetur ſaltem, ubi immenſum videt illud Scholiorum quaſi Pelagus, in quo demerſus Author atque obrutus, vix effert ſummum caput. *Olivet. Præf. in Cicer.*

Neque opprimere aggredimur commentariorum mole vividos Scripturarum ſenſus . . . neque cibos ad ſatietatem oggerimus; ſed acuere nitimur meditandi quærendique cupiditatem ipsâ Scripturæ copiâ atque veritate ſatiandam . . . interim Lectorem optamus tam diligentem fieri, ut notis quàm minimùm indigeat. *Boſſuet, Præf. in Prov. Sal.*

§ Cavenda in Sacræ Scripturæ explanatione nimia ſubtilitas & argutia. *Cornelius à Lapide.*

Authors likewiſe who refine too much, are to be read with no leſs caution; particularly in our firſt Studies of ſacred Literature; for as the Former incumber the Scriptures with an exuberance of their own Learning, ſo Theſe ſpin out the plainneſs and ſincerity of the Text into ſmall threads and ſubtleties, which are, indeed, of wonderful fineneſs for the work, but of little ſubſtance and profit. Such Curioſities inſtead of inſtructing the Learner, often puzzle and make him giddy: they turn Reality into a Shadow, and Truth into a Dream; and, as *Seneca* obſerves, when things are moſt refined, they are neareſt nothing.

AMONGST all the Commentators, who have kept clear of theſe and all other Extremes,

Prudentem ſemper admoneo Lectorem ut non ſuperſtitioſis acquieſcat interpretationibus, & quæ commaticè pro fingentium dicuntur arbitrio; ſed conſideret priora, media, & ſequentia, & nectat ſibi univerſa quæ dicta ſunt. *S. Hieronymus.*

Verborum minutiis frangunt rerum pondera.

—Non abſtruſa & recondita, hoc eſt, plerumque vana, ſed apta atque accommodata ad ſimplicem litteralemque intelligentiam. *Boſſuet, Præf. in Pſal.*

and

and are moſt ſuited to a Beginner in the Study of the Scriptures, I ſhould give the preference to *Menochius*. The diſtinguiſhing Character of this Author is Judgment: He had the Advantage of writing after the moſt able Authors of the *Society of Jeſus*, *Maldonatus*, *Sa*, *Mariana*, *Serrarius*, *à Lapide*, *Ribera*, *Bonfrerius* and *Tirinus*; and he has collected what is moſt uſeful from thoſe truly great Men. His ſtile is clear, conciſe and elegant; he has hardly a ſuperfluous word, and very few miſtakes. The Preface to his Commentaries is very ſhort in compariſon of the long and exquiſite Diſſertations of *Serarius* and *Bonfrerius*; but it is ſuited to the Plan he had laid down, and of a piece with the reſt of his Work. However, as ſuch general Diſcourſes enlarge the Mind, and help greatly to underſtand the Scriptures in a liberal and extenſive manner, I would, by all means, have you converſant with the Prefaces of the two laſt mentioned Authors, and thoſe of *Tirinus*, as the moſt perfect that have yet appeared: to which you may join the Diſcourſes of the ſame kind of *à Lapide*, and his *Canons*, which are highly eſteemed.

THERE has lately appeared in *France* a Work well deſerving your Attention. It is a Latin Tranſlation of the Old Teſtament from the original Tongues, with copious Prefaces and critical Notes. The *Folio* Edition, in four large Tomes, contains the Text, the Tranſlation, the Prefaces and Notes. And there is another Edition in eight Tomes in 4to, of the Verſion alone, with the Prefaces in two ſeparate Tomes. The Author is an *Oratorian*, his name *Houbigant*. He does not pretend to a Tranſlation ſtrictly and rigidly literal, but ſuch as the difference of Idioms will admit. One would almoſt imagine it to have been done under the immediate inſpection of the ſacred Penmen, by *Hebrews*, indeed, yet perfect Maſters of the Latin Tongue. The Language is pure, the Phraſe conciſe and nervous, and does not only give the Senſe and Spirit of the Scriptures, but likewiſe the Genius and Manners of thoſe remote Ages, in which they were writ. This Work, which is not more diffuſe than the *Vulgate*, has the exactneſs of a Tranſlation, with moſt of the Advantages of a Paraphraſe, and even of a Commentary; and anſwers, in great

great meaſure, moſt of the uſeful purpoſes of both. If you read the *Pſalms*, the book of *Job*, and the *Prophets*, which are the moſt difficult parts of the holy Writings, you will perceive I have not ſaid more than the Subject will bear; and the Work, if you are not already acquainted with it, will gain one Admirer more. However, I think myſelf obliged to caution you againſt this Author's Aſſertion concerning the Extent of the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament; which appears to me very faulty: it is the ſixth of thoſe Prejudices, which he ſets down as Obſtacles to the right underſtanding the Prophets.

WHAT I have already taken the liberty to recommend, will alone, if rightly attended to, make you no contemptible Proficient in the moſt divine of all Sciences, and which, I hope, will be no leſs agreeable to your inclination, than it is ſuited to the Profeſſion you intend to embrace. But as I have the pleaſure of knowing you to be a young man of a very promiſing Genius, and that your deſire of improvement is equal to your capacity, I will point out to you a few more Works in this

Branch

Branch of Study, which have not only the general approbation of the Learned, but are peculiarly adapted to pleaſe and cultivate an elegant and religious mind. I ſhall, however, be very moderate in this choice, and not forget I recommend it to a Perſon, who is to learn, at the ſame time, the other Parts of *Divinity* as well as this. And, if my approbation ſhould be of any weight with you, I will propoſe no Author to your reading, from whom I have not received uncommon ſatisfaction myſelf.——*Boſſuet*'s Latin Diſſertation on the *Pſalms*, which is prefixed to his Notes on them, is recommended by that order, diſtinction, and beauty, which conſtitute the Perfection of a Work, and ſhew the Ability of the Writer. That great Man propoſed writing Notes on the Whole Bible; but death prevented him from going beyond the *Pſalms*, and the Books of *Wiſdom*. I except his Explication of the *Revelations*, which was wrote on a different Plan from that he deſigned to follow in his other Works on Scripture, and is indeed worthy the Biſhop of *Meaux*. I would have you alſo read his Prefaces to all the Books of *Wiſdom*, and his Expoſition of

*Solomon's*

*Solomon's Song*, which, tho' a very delicate undertaking, he has executed in ſo maſterly a manner, with ſuch clearneſs and brevity, that thoſe who have not read it, can have no notion of its merit. I muſt add, that his Language is not unworthy the pureſt times of the Latin Tongue.—*Riberia*'s five ſhort Books * *on the Temple, and what belonged to it*, ſurpaſs every thing which has been wrote on that Subject, and are of ſingular uſe towards the underſtanding ſeveral parts of the Old and New Teſtament. The Moral and Allegorical Expoſition of the Ceremonies and Types of the Jewiſh Law, which is the chief ſubject and purpoſe of this Work, is ſo natural, and ſo exquiſitely adapted to give the mind the higheſt idea of Chriſtian perfection, that it is hard not to be ſenſible of the energy with which this inſtruction is conveyed.——Cardinal *Sadoletus* has wrote on St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Romans* with all the Advantages of piety, learning and politeneſs. You will find in the Work of this illuſtrious Author not only a moſt judicious and compleat Commentary on a part of the inſpired Writings, which both

* De Templo & eis quæ ad Templum pertinent.

on

on account of the Subject, and the Apoſtle's manner of treating it, is, as * St. *Peter* himſelf acknowledges, *difficult to be underſtood*; but likewiſe a finiſhed piece of Chriſtian Morality, and of genuine Roman Eloquence.—As the underſtanding the *Pſalms* is of great importance to all in holy Orders, who repeat them ſo often, you may, when you have leiſure, read the Expoſition of them by Cardinal *Bellarmine*. His Character given by Cardinal *du Perron*, who was not only acquainted with his Works, but knew him perſonally, appears in none of his writings to greater advantage than in this: † *That he had very fine and clear Parts, and excelled in throwing a wonderful Light on the ſubjects he treated.* ‡ Another very compleat Judge in ſuch Matters has given his opinion, that this Expoſition alone, with the Paraphraſe of *Cornelius Janſenius*, is ſufficient to give the Reader that accurate knowledge of the *Pſalms*, without which, St. *Auſtin* ſays, a perſon can ſcarcely deſerve the name of a

* Epiſt. 2d. ch. 3.

† Perroniana B.

‡ *Card. Bona*, de divinâ Pſalmodia, c. 16. § 11.

Prieſt.

Prieſt. The piety of this Work is equal to the erudition; and *Menochius* has made great uſe of it where he treats the ſame Subject.

THE Method Mr. *Locke* has followed in explaining *St. Paul's Epiſtles* is very judicious and ſatisfactory. * He expounds the Apoſtle by his own words, and thoſe of the other inſpired Writers only; and the ſame method might be applied, with great ſucceſs, to the reſt of the Scriptures. This Work, however, ſhould be read with ſuch caution that the Errors which occur in it, even thoſe which ſeem but ſlightly touched on and dropt, as it were, by accident, may neither eſcape the Reader's obſervation or endanger his principles. He has joined a Paraphraſe to his Notes, which is much eſteemed.

HAVING ſpoken of the Text of the ſacred Oracles, and of thoſe who have expounded it, as much as my deſign and your information ſeem to require; I muſt add a few Works, and thoſe not voluminous, which may be

* Sacra Scriptura inter ſe collata & compoſita, optima ſui ipſius eſt interpres. *Cor. à Lapide.*

con-

conſidered as Appendixes to the Commentators, and ſuch as greatly contribute to a full and accurate knowledge of holy Writ.—— *Fleury*'s Treatiſes * *of the Manners of the Iſraelites and the Chriſtians* are valuable for their great accuracy, piety, and univerſal uſe in all that regards the hiſtorical part of the *Old* and *New Teſtament:* they preſent the Reader with a juſt and elegant Abridgment of that *Theocracy*, which the Scriptures deſcribe in its full extent.— † *Menochius*'s Books *on the Jewiſh Common-Wealth* are of the ſame ſtamp, and not inferior to his Commentaries—— ‡ *Serarius*'s little Work *of the three Sects amongſt the Jews*, is very learned, the ſubject extremely curious and uſeful, and the Author's manner of treating it gained him great reputation—There are ſome particular Paſſages of the Scriptures, and even ſingle Texts, which require an accurate diſcuſſion; ſuch, for inſtance, amongſt many others, is that celebrated Prediction concerning the *Meſſiah*,

* *Les Mœurs des Iſraelites & des Chrétiens.*

† *De Republicâ Hebræorum.*

‡ *De tribus apud Judæos Sectis.*

*Gen.* xlix. *v.* 10. which is expounded by the Author of the Diſcourſes *on the Uſe and Intent of Prophecy*, in one of the moſt ſatisfactory and maſterly Diſſertations I have ever read.—A Diſſertation of Cardinal *Bellarmine* on the authority of the *Vulgate*, found in the *Jeſuits* Library at *Mecklin*, and firſt publiſhed by a Profeſſor of their Order at *Witzburgh*, is ſo accurate and judicious a performance, ſo perfectly clear of all prejudice and thoſe opinions, which border on either Extreme; ſo new (at leaſt, it was ſo to me) and yet ſo agreeable to Truth, that the Curious and Intelligent in Scripture Learning may congratulate themſelves on the diſcovery of a Piece, which had lain ſo long unheard of, and was only brought to light by an accident, ſo lately as the year 1749. * A late French Publiſher of the Bible has tranſlated and prefixed it to his Edition; in which there are ſeveral Diſſertations; as likewiſe in that of *Calmet*, which furniſh both information and improvement.

* *A Paris, Rue St. Jacques, à L'Etoile*, 1750.

By the help of theſe few and ſhort Treatiſes, the *Scriptures* will preſent themſelves to you in a very different light from what they appear to the generality of Readers; they will reach your Heart as well as inform and enlarge your Mind: you will enter into the ſpirit of them, and be admitted not only into the outward Courts of the *Sanctuary*, but into the *Holy of Holies* *.

This is a ſhort ſketch of what might be ſaid on this copious ſubject. You are not to imagine that by theſe, or any other human helps, we ſhall ever attain to a full and perfect knowledge of the *Scriptures* †. The

* Atque idcircò magna Deo gratia habenda eſt, quòd quas Litteras voluerit mentibus noſtris clariſſimum lumen præferre ad vitam rectè inſtituendam, & ad æternam ſalutem capeſſendam, earum quoque juſſit ſingularem eſſe & incomparabilem ubertatem, quæ ex interpretationum concordi varietate in primis perſpicitur. *P. Morin, Ep. ad Sixtum* 5. *P. M.*

† Ita voluit Deus ſua arcana Conſilia ad cognitionem hominum diſpenſari, ut aliquid ſemper novum ſcrutantibus appareret; nullaque unquam poſſet Ætas, nulla diſcerpentium nec haurientium multitudo divitias conſumere infinitæ ſapientiæ ſuæ. *Sadoletus Com. in Epiſ. ad Rom. l.* 1.

more

more you read, the more you meditate on them, the more you will diſcover in them an inexhauſtible ſource of light, and of all manner of inſtruction: that their language is not the language of men, nor the ſubject a production of their ingenuity: that they have a Character peculiar to themſelves, and different from the compoſitions even of the greateſt and beſt men: that they are exempt from, and ſuperior to all common paſſions and intereſts, and to the ordinary views of human prudence and forecaſt; in fine, that no man ever raiſed himſelf ſo much above humanity as to produce a work, in which all is ſo ſuperior to man.

'* The Truths of Religion, ſays *Lactan-*
'*tius*, are delivered in a brief and plain man-
'ner; ſuch as beſt became the Majeſty of
'God: who, when he declares his will to
'men, can have no need of aſſigning reaſons

* Sacra tradita ſunt breviter ac nudè; non enim decebat aliter, ut cùm Deus ad hominem loqueretur, argumentis aſſereret voces ſuas, tanquam fides ei non haberetur: ſed, ut oportuit, eſt locutus, quaſi rerum omnium maximus Judex, cujus non eſt argumentari ſed pronuntiare. *Lactantius.*

'for it, as if he was not to be believed or 'obeyed on other terms. He ſpoke there-'fore as the ſupreme Arbiter of All, whoſe 'Prerogative it is not to argue, but aſſert.'

It is to this peculiar and priviledged character, with which the Spirit of God had been pleaſed to ſtamp the Scriptures, that *Sulpitius Severus* has, with no leſs religion than elegance, aſcribed the ſilence, which is remarkable in the Heathen Authors, concerning the facts related in them. The obſervation is ſo finely touched in the original, that I am almoſt afraid to venture to tranſlate it. '* Let it not ſeem ſtrange to any one, ſays 'he, that the facts contained in Holy Writ, 'are not mentioned by profane writers. 'A ſuperior diſpoſition of Providence over-

* Cæterùm, illud minimè mirum eſſe oportebit, quòd Scriptores ſæcularium litterarum nihil ex his, quæ ſacris voluminibus ſcripta ſunt, attigerunt: Dei ſpiritu prævalente, ut intaminata ab ore corrupto, & falſis vera miſcente, intra ſua tantùm Myſteria contineretur Hiſtoria; quæ ſeparata à mundi negotiis, & ſacris tantùm vocibus proferenda, permiſceri cum aliis, velut æquali ſorte non debuit. Etenim erat indigniſſimum, ut alia agentibus, aut alia quærentibus hæc quoque cum reliquis miſcerentur. *Hiſ. Sac. l.* 2.

'ruled here, that this Hiſtory might receive 'no adulteration from corrupt men, and 'ſuch as advance indifferently both truth and 'falſhood; but be confined within its own 'Myſteries: for being ſeparated from world-'ly concerns, and not to be treated but with 'awe and reverence, it ought to have no-'thing common with other writings. And, 'indeed, it would have been the higheſt in-'dignity that theſe ſacred matters ſhould on-'ly have ſerved as an occaſional ſubject to 'writers, who were bent on other views and 'other purſuits.'——No foreign aſſiſtance could be wanting to give a Sanction to a Work recommended by ſuch Evidence.—The moſt accurate of the Pagan Authors are juſtly charged with errors, darkneſs and uncertainties with reſpect both to Facts and Doctrine: but it became the wiſe and great Being, who inſpired the ſacred Penmen, to exempt their Works from all ſuch imputations; and, accordingly, he has favoured them with every argument of truth and perſuaſion, adorned them with the graces of language and ſentiment, lighted up and enlivened them with the brighteſt examples of virtue and

ſanctity, annexed to their ſtudy and meditation ſuch helps and communications of his holy Spirit as cannot be deſcribed, and made the belief and practice of them the only foundation of true peace and happineſs. In this manner, Revelation being the Work of a God, whoſe darling Attributes are Truth and Holineſs, has had every mark and every diſtinction of this two-fold Character. And Mankind beholding this *Urim & Thummim*, this *Wiſdom* and *Sanctity*, which equally diſpenſe the Oracles of the *Chriſtian* and *Moſaic* Doctrine, muſt acknowledge the gracious purpoſe of the Almighty Lawgiver, who requires the ſubmiſſion of our underſtanding, and the obedience of our wills, to no other end than to make us partakers of thoſe perfections, which have their ſource and fulneſs in him alone.

Not that we are to expect to meet with the forms of argumentation in every part of the Scriptures. Such niceties would have ill become the Majeſty of him who delivered them: but where theſe are wanting, the ſeeming deficiency is abundantly compenſated by a convic-

conviction ſuperior to whatever could have been derived from the rules and accuracy of argument: and the impreſſion is felt no leſs by the will than the underſtanding. Thus while art is overlooked, an end is attained beyond the reach of it.

EVERY one readily allows no ſubject can be equal to the Life of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, to the Incarnation and Birth; the Miracles and Doctrine; the Sufferings and Death; the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of a God become Man to reform and ſave a ſinful and loſt World: and whoever imagines this Hiſtory can be better wrote than it is by the *Evangeliſts*, does not yet underſtand it *. But though it becomes a Chriſtian to be particularly converſant in this and the other Writings of the *New Teſtament*, yet there is not any part of the *Old* which does not furniſh ample matter of inſtruction.—The Book of *Geneſis*, in the account it gives of the Creation, of the Fall and Puniſhment of our firſt Parents, of the Righteouſneſs of *Noah*, of the Deluge, of the wonderful Obe-

* *Mabillon.*

dience of *Abraham*, and the Promiſe made by God to reward it, of the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, and the Providence of God over the Patriarch *Joſeph*, preſents to our minds the moſt ſuitable ſubjects to fill them with every Chriſtian ſentiment. When we go on to *Exodus*, we ſee the Wonders wrought by the Almighty in favour of his People, the Impenitence of *Pharaoh*, and the various chaſtiſements by which the Murmurings and Idolatry of the *Iſraelites* in the Deſert were puniſhed. *Leviticus* and *Numbers* ſet forth the accuracy which God exacts in his Worſhip: *Deuteronomy*, the ſanctity of his Laws; *Joſhua*, the Accompliſhment of his Promiſes. In the Book of *Judges*, we ſee the ſtrength and weakneſs of *Sampſon*; in that of *Ruth*, the plain-dealing and equity of *Booz*; in thoſe of *Kings*, the holineſs of *Samuel*, of *Elijah*, of *Eliſha*, and the other Prophets; the reprobation of *Saul*; the Fall and Repentance of *David*, his mildneſs and patience: the Wiſdom and Sin of *Solomon*; the Piety of *Hezekiah* and *Joſiah*. In *Eſdras*, the zeal for the Law of God; in *Tobit*, the conduct of a holy Family; in *Judith*, the power of Grace; in *Eſther*, Prudence;

in

in *Job*, a pattern of admirable Patience. The *Macchabees* afford ſuch inſtances of perſonal and national Bravery; ſuch an exalted and generous Love of our Country, and all this grounded on the true Principles of Valour and Patriotiſm, as the moſt boaſted Atchievements in profane Story are perfect Strangers to. The *Proverbs* and *Eccleſiaſtes*, and the other two books which go under the title of the *Wiſdom of Solomon* and *of the Son of Sirach*, teach a more uſeful and ſublime Philoſophy than all the Writings which *Greece* and *Rome* have publiſhed. The noble Images and Reflexions, the profound Reaſonings on human actions, and excellent Precepts for the government of life, ſufficiently witneſs their inſpired origin. This Treaſure, indeed, is thrown together in a confuſed magnificence, above all order, that every one may collect and digeſt ſuch Obſervations as chiefly tend to his own particular inſtruction. And though it behoves us to reverence the Doctrine of the holy Ghoſt, without pretending to aſſign the reaſons for his diſpenſing it in this or that manner, yet, I think, we perceive the fitneſs of the Method

here taken, in ſetting forth the nature, ſubſtance, and end of our obligations; and, without entering on minute Diſcuſſions, in taking in the whole Compaſs of Duty: for by this means the Paths of Life are not only pointed out to each individual, and his perſonal character formed; but the minds of Mankind, in general, are furniſhed and enriched with the beauty, copiouſneſs, and variety of all Virtues. The *Prophets* announce not only the Promiſes, but alſo the characteriſtic Marks of the *Meſſiah*, with the threats againſt Sinners, and thoſe calamities which were to befall the *Jews* and other Nations. The Pſalms unite in themſelves the chief ſubjects, and all the different excellencies of the *Old Teſtament*. In a word, every thing in the ſacred Writings will appear, as it truly is, holy, grand, and profitable, provided it be read with ſuitable diſpoſitions.

The only reaſon of our being ſo little touched by them, muſt be our inadvertence and indifference to whatever is tried by a higher Teſt than that of our Senſes: and being ſo taken up with other purſuits, as to

be but ſlightly affected with ſuch a chaſte and holy Diſcipline, as can never poſſeſs a heart which is not freed from the tumult of paſſions and worldly deſires *. And Saint *Athanaſius* has obſerved, that *we can never underſtand the Scriptures, but in proportion as we live by the Rules they preſcribe.*

I SHALL finiſh this Subject, which is ſo appoſite to the main deſign of this Diſcourſe, and of ſuch real and univerſal uſe, with obſerving that the *Scriptures* can never be underſtood unleſs we make them the Subject of deliberate enquiry, and of frequent and ſerious reflexion; and, not underſtood, they cannot become, what they ought to be, the Object of our admiration, love and reverence; the Rule of every detail of our Actions, and the governing Principle of our whole life.—— Many, from whoſe education and profeſſion another behaviour might be expected, neglect to be converſant in them, with equal folly and ingratitude: Many read them in a haſty and ſuperficial manner: Many, again, read

* Adde, quòd ne Studio quidem operis pulcherrimi vacare mens, niſi omnibus vitiis libera, poteſt. *Quintilianus*, l. 10. c. 1.

them

them only by ſcraps and parcels, and conſequently, can only view them in a narrow, and pedantic light.——Inſtead of this, we ſhould converſe with them often, we ſhould pierce into their Soul and Spirit; we ſhould contemplate them on all ſides, in all their parts, and in the whole; and accuſtom our ſelves to judge and decide on matters by their light, as we do of outward objects by the Sun beams.——But let no view unbecoming the ſanctity of the Subject engage you in a Science, which ſhould be undertaken with the ſpirit of Prayer rather than of Study. It is a kind of profanation to ſearch theſe ſacred Treaſures more to embelliſh your mind with Knowledge, than to cultivate and adorn it with Virtue: and (which is a frequent error in the Learned) with a view to teach rather than to practiſe. This diſpoſition is very different from that which is taken notice of in *Eſdras*, of *ſearching the Law of God; in order, firſt to fulfil, and then teach it.* After this great Example, you are not only to endeavour to render the knowledge of this Law as familiar and exact as poſſible, but to fulfil it alſo, before you begin to inſtruct others.

The

The Leſſons there laid down, and ſo much inſiſted on, concerning purity of Life, contempt of Riches, the ſpirit of Peace, and Mildneſs, and the fulneſs of Charity, ſhould be conſidered as no leſs perſonal, than if God had declared his Will on theſe Heads to each one in particular.——By this method of reading and meditating on the *Scriptures*, you will improve in every Chriſtian accompliſhment, and fit your ſelf for a more accurate, more enlarged, and more perfect ſervice of that God, by whoſe Inſpiration they were wrote, and who intended they ſhould inform our lives, not gratify a roving and unſettled mind.——Indeed, the moſt ordinary obſtacles to our progreſs in this Study are Curioſity and Eagerneſs; the latter is the conſequence of the former, and a Student is always eager in proportion as he is curious. The impatience of knowing ſtill more hurries us on, and the love of Truth is leſs the ſpring of our Vivacity, than that of Novelty. A ſlow and ſilent ſtudy of a ſingle ſentence of the *Scriptures*, like a heavenly Dew, would ſink deep into our minds and refreſh them; whereas haſte and precipitation, like an impetuous

petuous Rain, which runs off almoſt as faſt as it falls, leaves us as unimproved after reading whole Books, as we were before. Let me exemplify the method I would recommend, in the following Inſtances.

WHAT can be more plain and obvious than the meaning of the firſt verſe of the ſeventh *Pſalm*; or where does ſimplicity both of ſenſe and expreſſion ſeem to ſuggeſt leſs matter for reflexion? *O God, look down unto my aid; Lord, make haſte to aſſiſt me.* And yet a holy *Abbot*, mentioned by *Caſſian*, has diſcovered in it the fund of the following reflexions, which are equally natural, inſtructive, and pious. * 'This ſhort Sentence, 'ſays the good Man, contains a prayer to 'God in time of danger; as likewiſe an

* Habet ille Verſiculus adverſus diſcrimina, invocationem Dei; habet humilitatem piæ confeſſionis; habet ſolicitudinis ac timoris perpetui vigilantiam; habet conſiderationem fragilitatis ſuæ, exauditionis fiduciam, confidentiam præſentis præſidii: habet amoris ardorem, inſidiantium formidinem, quibus perſpiciens ſe noctu diuque vallatum, confitetur ſe non poſſe ſine ſui Defenſoris auxilio liberari. *Colla.* 10. cap. 10.

'humble

'humble ſenſe of our own inſufficiency: it 'awakens a ſolicitude and conſtant fear of of- 'fending: it cauſes us to reflect on our 'weakneſs, and to pray with a confidence of 'being heard, and of the divine Succour 'being always ready at hand: it expreſſes 'the fervour of Charity, and a juſt appre- 'henſion of the ſnares of our inviſible ene- 'mies, from whoſe repeated aſſaults we can- 'not be ſecured, but by the aſſiſtance of the 'Almighty.'——The Reader's piety, and * *that flame, which, David* ſays, *is enkindled by meditation,* will make him diſcern, more than any Commentary, the ſame depth of thought and fruitfulneſs of conſideration in all the *Pſalms:* almoſt in every verſe of them.

I SHALL take a ſecond inſtance from an hiſtorical paſſage of St. *Stephen*'s Martyrdom †. *Being full of the holy Ghoſt, he ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God.* In which words we may remark, that the poſture in which our bleſſed Saviour is repreſented, is proper to a perſon in his full vigour and perfection, and ſuited to the oc-

* *Pſal.* 38. e. v. † *Acts,* ch. vii.

caſion

caſion of that glorious Apparition; for he appeared, either as a Champion, to combat for St. *Stephen*; or as an Advocate, to plead his cauſe before his eternal Father; or as a high Prieſt, offering up this firſt Victim to him; or as the Maſter of the Race, ſhowing to the Martyr the Goal of everlaſting Glory, and encouraging him to gain it by laying down his own life.

THE third and laſt inſtance ſhall be taken from the *Proverbs*; *He that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord:* 'there is more Rhetorick, 'ſays Sir *Thomas Brown*, in that one Sen-'tence than in a Library of Sermons; and, 'indeed, if thoſe Sentences were underſtood 'by the Reader, with the ſame Emphaſis as 'they are delivered by the Author, we needed 'not thoſe Volumes of Inſtructions, but 'might be wiſe by an Epitome.'

To this deliberate and reſpectful method of Study, you are to join an humble and teachable mind, prayer, temperance, and that tranquillity which reſults from Paſſions ſubdued, or, at leaſt, brought to move within their

their due bounds, and not diſturb the even Temper of the Soul. * *For the holy Spirit of Inſtruction will ſhun whatever is contrary to genuine goodneſs, and withdraw himſelf from thoughts which are without underſtanding, and be checked by every blemiſh of the inward Man.*

THESE appear the moſt requiſite diſpoſitions for reading the *Scriptures* with that Spirit, with which they were wrote; and, indeed, for undertaking and purſuing the Study of *Divinity*, in general.——I have ſome doubt, if it be not preſumption to have given my opinion on a Subject, to which I am, on ſo many accounts, unequal. But your own piety, and the excellent diſcipline of the place where you are, as it would have made even the moſt compleat Inſtructions on this Head leſs neceſſary, ſo it will ſupply whatever is deficient in theſe.

I SHALL now go on to the other Branches of *Eccleſiaſtical Learning*, which are the *Fathers*, *Church Hiſtory*, and *Divinity*. Next to the *Scriptures* therefore, the Writings of the *Fa-*

* *Wiſdom*, ch. i.

*thers*

*thers* claim our attention and reverence: their uſefulneſs, importance, and authority have acquired them this rank; and it has been given them by the Good and Judicious of all ages. However you muſt not imagine I expect you ſhould read all their Works, or even any conſiderable part of them, during a Courſe of four years ſtudy of *Divinity*. Such an undertaking would be idle and chimerical; and I am perſuaded but few perſons, who had nothing elſe to do, and many years allotted for this Taſk alone, would be equal to it. Beſides, ſuch various reading would, generally ſpeaking, oppreſs the mind inſtead of enlarging it, and quite extinguiſh that Spirit it was intended to light up and improve. The Faculties of the Intellect have a cloſe Analogy with thoſe of the Body, which can digeſt no greater quantity, even of the moſt wholeſome food, than is ſuited to them. We are therefore to apply to the former what *Cicero* ſays of the nouriſhment of the latter, *let ſo much be taken as may recruit our ſtrength, not overpower it.* With this Caution, I would, by all means, have you acquainted, during your ſtudies of *Divinity*, with

with the Works of the *Fathers*, ſo far, at leaſt, as to know the Times in which they wrote, the chief Subjects they have treated, their different Manner of treating them, their Stile, their Method of Reaſoning, their various Excellencies of eloquence, erudition, and piety. Now all this may be compaſſed with great eaſe and advantage by a judicious choice of the Works of theſe venerable Writers, and ſetting aſide about two hours on all Sundays and Feſtivals for a reading ſo becoming thoſe times. You ſhould read, in their turn, both the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers, and thoſe Works, preferably to others, which have a nearer connexion with your Studies.

SAINT *Leo*'s Letter to *Flavian*; the thirty third, and three following Orations of Saint *Gregory Nazianzen*; the Letter of St. *Athanaſius* to *Epictetus*; the Treatiſe concerning the *H. Ghoſt*, by *Didymus* of *Alexandria*, which we only have in St. *Hierome*'s tranſlation; are ſome of the moſt excellent Works, which have been wrote on the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*. I only exemplify what I have juſt

before advanced, in one Inſtance, which you may apply to all your Studies.

When you are become a little converſant with theſe Writers, you will perceive they were not only great Saints, but Genius's of the firſt Claſs; and have not only expreſſed in their Works the Spirit; but likewiſe the different Excellencies of Stile ſo remarkable in the inſpired Writings. Indeed, *Cicero*'s definition of Eloquence, * *that it is Wiſdom with the Advantages of Elocution*, agrees ſo perfectly with the *Scriptures*, and thoſe Writings which bear a reſemblance with them, that it is, properly ſpeaking, applicable to none beſides.——The Choice and Diſpoſition of Facts, in the *Hiſtorical* Parts; the Conciſeneſs and Spirit, and, at the ſame time the Clearneſs with which theſe Facts are ſet forth: In the *Poetical*, the Loftineſs of the Elocution, the Variety of the Figures, the Elevation of Thought: In the *Moral*, the Weight and Energy of the Precepts: In the *Prophets*, the Vehemence of their Threats and Reproaches,

* Copiosè loquens Sapientia.

proaches, the Perſuaſion of their Promiſes, their moving Expoſtulations, the Richneſs of their Expreſſion, their fine and ſtriking Deſcriptions, and numberleſs other Beauties recommend the *Scriptures*, conſidered merely as a Compoſition, above all other Writings. You will have the pleaſure of making the ſame diſcovery, in proportion, in the Works of the *Fathers*.

St. *Baſil* and St. *Athanaſius* reaſon as cloſely, and with as much ſtrength as *Ariſtotle*: the Eloquence of St. *Gregory* the *Divine*, and St. *Chryſoſtome* is little inferior to that of *Tully* and *Demoſthenes*. The Invectives of the Former againſt the *Apoſtate* Emperor *Julian*, carry with them a Thunder as pointed as that of the *Philippics*; at the ſame time that the Cauſe and Argument have a Superiority, of which the whole Pagan Syſtem, and, indeed, all Temporal Concerns, how important ſoever, muſt fall infinitely ſhort.——Though the *Latin Fathers* lay under Diſadvantages with reſpect to Learning, from which the *Greek* were exempt, yet they abound with the moſt uſeful, and frequently with the or-

namental part of Knowledge; and all the Excellencies of *Plato* are to be found in St. *Auſtin*. *Eraſmus*, who will not be ſuſpected of partiality to this Writer, ſays of his Books, *Of the Manners of the Catholic Church and the Manicheans*; * 'the Subject is treated with 'wonderful elegance, which it were to be 'wiſhed the holy *Doctor* had imployed in his 'other Works; that this, however, was a 'proof that whatever offends the Learned 'in his manner of writing, was not the ef-'fect of inability, but charity, which cauſed 'him to let down his Stile to the meaneſt 'Capacities.' I deſire you to read that *Critic*'s Preface to his Edition of the Saint's Letters, and, if you pleaſe, the Dedication of all his Works, to *Fonſeca*, Archbiſhop of *Toledo*. I am not ignorant that the Founder of the *Jeſuits*, a Perſon no leſs eminent for his prudence than the ſanctity of his life, has

* Id facit admirabili ſermonis elegantiâ, quâ utinam illi uti licuiſſet in cæteris lucubrationibus. Hoc ſanè opere declaravit, ſi quid offendit Eruditos in ipſius dictione, non fuiſſe inſcitiæ ſed charitatis, quâ ſtilum demiſit ad Imperitorum intelligentiam. *Eraſ. in præf. in Lib. de moribus. Eccle. Cath. & Man.*

forbid

forbid thoſe of his *Order* to read the Works of *Eraſmus*; and, though it be ſomething foreign to my preſent purpoſe, I cannot but obſerve, that whoever has read any conſiderable part of them, or the Anſwer to an Apology which *Marſollier* wrote in their defence, will be convinced of their pernicious tendency, and that St. *Ignatius*'s caution is very equitable.——But, to return to the Subject of the *Fathers*: St. *Cyprian* has a diſtinguiſhed merit for energy both of ſentiment and expreſſion; and all the graces, all the perſuaſion, all the endearments of Sanctity (if I may be allowed to ſpeak in this manner) center in St. *Bernard*.—— Nobility, wealth, honours, and every worldly accompliſhment conſpired to form the Character of S. *Paulinus*, till the love of God made him exchange all theſe advantages for the humility of the Goſpel. His Epiſtles and Poems, which make up the ſmall Volume we have of his Works, ſhow how ſuperior the Spirit of Chriſtianity is to every thing which a vain and infatuated World courts and admires; and that the imitation of *Jeſus Chriſt* raiſes the greateſt Men more above themſelves, than

any inequality of Condition can raiſe one Man above another.—St. *Leo*'s Eloquence is of a peculiar kind, but has an elevation and majeſty equal to the ſupreme Dignity of the Writer.——No Philoſopher underſtood human nature better, or has made a nicer Anatomy of the heart, and all its foldings, than St. *Gregory* the *Great*; eſpecially in his *Moral Books* on *Job*.——*Caniſius*'s Edition of St. *Hieromé*'s ſelect Epiſtles is equally adapted to entertain and improve; and the whole Spirit of St. *Paul* breaths through thoſe of St. *Ignatius*.

You may obſerve that ſeveral of the *Fathers*, in the Explication of *Scripture*, ſeldom inſiſt much on the *Literal* Senſe, unleſs when a Point of Doctrine is to be eſtabliſhed, or an Error refuted. On other occaſions, for the moſt part, they give themſelves up to the *Moral* Senſe, and think they have then attained the true *Meaning*, or, to ſay better, the true *Intention* of the *Scriptures*, when they have turned them all to the information of Manners.

It may not, perhaps, be neceſſary to caution you againſt a falſe Delicacy, which would take offence at ſome Blemiſhes which occur in the Writings of theſe venerable Authors. A harſh Metaphor in *Tertullian*; a ſwoln Period in St. *Cyprian*; an obſcure Paſſage in St. *Ambroſe*; a Quibble or Gingle of words, a ſtrained Allegory in St. *Auſtin*, ſhould not make you think leſs reverently of the Works, much leſs of the Perſons of theſe Authors. They are, indeed, blemiſhes in the Compoſition, but not in the Subject; and not ſo much to be charged on the Writers, as on the Country and Times in which they wrote: or, if they are faults in the latter, * 'they are ſuch, as the Poet ſays, in-'attention lets drop, or human weakneſs can 'ſcarcely avoid; and are compenſated in ſuch 'a manner that every candid Reader will be 'willing to overlook a few faults, where ſo 'many excellencies call for his attention.'

——† We ſhould be very reſerved, ſays another

* *Hor. Ar. Poet.*

† Modeſtè tamen & circumſpecto judicio de tantis viris pronuntiandum eſt, ne, quod pleriſque accidit, damnent quæ

another of the beſt Judges that learning and penetration ever formed, when we give our opinion of Great Men, leſt, as it frequently happens, inſtead of diſcovering their miſtakes, we betray our own ignorance. And, if both Extremes could not be avoided, it were more eligible to approve every thing they have wrote, than to diſlike many.

Some of the late Writers of our own Country (with ſorrow and ſhame I own it) have been notoriouſly wanting to candor and equity on this Head, and have accordingly, treated it with the higheſt indecency. But * *a Scoffer*, as *Solomon* ſays, *ſeeks for Wiſdom, and does not find it:* and as theſe Perſons ſeem only to have read with a luſt to miſapply, it is no wonder they were given up to their own perverſeneſs, and have gained the applauſe of Readers, as profane as themſelves, at the expence of Religion, Juſtice, and even good

non intelligunt. Ac ſi neceſſe eſt in alteram errare partem, omnia eorum legentibus placere, quàm multa diſplicere maluerim. *Quintil.* l. 10. c. 1.

* *Prov.* ch. xiv. *v.* 6.

Senſe,

Senſe.——This, however, for the guilt of the Age we live in, is now become a ſubject of leſs indignation; ſince, to ſay nothing of others, a very modern impious Declaimer, whoſe Quality and Parts have only rendered his Crime and Infamy more conſpicuous, has repreſented the Divine Oracles both of the Old and New Teſtament, as the Productions of Folly, and Ignorance of the true Principles of Morality *. This rare Diſcovery was reſerved to the *All-accompliſhed* Perſon, *in whom Happineſs dwelt*, and *who knew*, it ſeems, *what it was to be Wiſe* †. The ſhortneſs of this Digreſſion, and the reſentment of injured Truth, which occaſioned it, muſt be its Apology.

Besides the Writings of the *Fathers* I have already mentioned, there are others, ſuch as *the Monitor of Vincent of Lerins*, and the *Oc-*

* Nonne Prodigio ſimile eſt aut natum eſſe hominem qui hæc diceret, aut extitiſſe qui crederet? *Lactant. de Irâ Dei*, cap. 10.

† Theſe, and ſeveral other Appellations of the ſame Import; are beſtowed, by Mr. *P.* on the late Ld. *B.*

*tavius*

*tavius of Minutius*, which are equally ſolid and elegant. I need not put down thoſe of *Lactantius*, in which there is all the eloquence and philoſophy of *Cicero*, with the pureſt Maxims of *Goſpel* Morality *. He wrote moſt of them before he was thoroughly inſtructed in the Chriſtian Religion; and therefore allowance muſt be made for ſuch Errors as did not proceed from pride and obſtinacy, but from want of more perfect information.

THESE, and ſuch like Writings, as I have ſaid, will ſoon convince you that ſeveral of the moſt celebrated Saints for their zeal for Religion, and the auſterity of their lives, were Men extremely civilized; and if, in their maturer years, they laid aſide human literature, it was not before they were perfectly acquainted with it.——Nay, it muſt be acknowledged to the advantage of polite Learning, that the moſt eminent *Divines*, both ancient and modern, have excelled in it, and ſeem to ſuppoſe it as a neceſſary Groundwork to

* Chriſtianorum omnium facundiſſimus eſt Lactantius: ſonum habet planè Ciceronianum, præterquam in paucis. *Lud. Vivés.*

higher

higher Studies. Was I to enumerate the Inſtances of this kind, the Liſt would never end. On the contrary, my own Reading and Obſervation (to go no higher) has let me ſee how ungraceful and heavy Theology appears, which is not raiſed on this Foundation.

The Works of *Caſſian* are an inexhauſtible Fund of every thing which can lead the Reader to Chriſtian Perfection: and I mention them the more willingly to you, as the Chief and Patron of the Schoolmen, St. *Thomas* of *Aquin*, and that great Proficient in the Science of Saints, *Claudius Aquaviva*, are reported to have been particularly converſant in them. I muſt beſtow the ſame commendation on a Work, which has a great affinity with this, the *Lives* of the *Fathers of the Deſart*, by *Ros-weide*. You ſhould get an early reliſh for this ſort of reading; becauſe, when you have leiſure afterwards, nothing can be more delightful, nothing more edifying than the Precepts, Maxims, and Examples, that is, than the whole Circle of Inſtruction, which make up theſe two celebrated Collections.

THE ſix ſhort Books of St. *Chryſoſtome* on *Prieſthood* are one of the moſt proper Works a Perſon can read before he takes Holy Orders, and as this is done towards the end of the higher Studies, I ſhall with them conclude what I had to ſay concerning thoſe Writings of the *Fathers*, which I ſhould deſire you to read during the courſe of them. But that you may be directed to a Method of reaping all the benefit of this Part of ſacred Literature, I muſt recommend to you, with uncommon earneſtneſs, a Treatiſe in four ſmall Books, printed at *Paris*, in the year 1697, which is a Maſterpiece of erudition, ſolidity, and elegance, and contains every rule, remark and inſtruction, which can be of uſe on this important Subject. The Title is, * *Of reading the Works of the Fathers of the Church*: the Author, if I am rightly informed, was a *Carthuſian*.

I OBSERVED in the beginning of this Diſcourſe, that the Writings of pious Men of all Ages, are a very natural Appendix to thoſe of the *Fathers*; and ſhall therefore point

* *Sur la Lecture des Peres de L'Egliſe.*

out ſome few Authors, who have excelled in this way, and who, I have reaſon to hope, will pleaſe you as much as they do me. *Alphonſus Rodriguez* has had the approbation of the whole Chriſtian World, and retains in the *French* Tranſlation by *Des-Marais* all the eaſe and ſpirit of the Original.——*Boſſuet's Elevations of the mind on the Myſteries of our Religion*, and his *Meditations on the Goſpels*, have all the dignity and ſpirit peculiar to that Author: they are not only Works of the moſt enlightened and moving piety, but likewiſe an excellent Commentary on the principal parts of the Scriptures.——The five ſmall Works of Cardinal *Bellarmine* * inforce † *the reaſonable ſervice* of Chriſtians of every Profeſſion in a very perſuaſive and moving manner, and being wrote from the Heart, they ſpeak to it.——*Leſſius's Conſiderations on the Names of God* ‡, though very ſhort, is ſo finiſhed a Piece, that the Author gave it the preference to a Commentary on all

* *Opuſcula Bellarmini.*

† *Rom.* ch. xii.

‡ *Conſiderationes de* 50 *Nominibus Dei.*

St.

St. *Thomas*'s Works, the Deſign of which he had conceived ſome time before his death. It has been publiſhed at *Bruſſels* and *Lovain*, and perhaps elſewhere. The *Lovain* Edition, by *Bovetius*, is preferable to any I have ſeen.——It would be injurious to your piety to imagine *the Imitation of Chriſt*, by *à Kempis*, had any need of being recommended to a perſon, who muſt know the eſteem in which this Book is held by all judicious Readers. The other Works of this Author carry with them the beſt of Characters, *Simplicity*.——The *Sancta Sophia*, an *Engliſh* Work with a *Latin* Title, by *F. Baker*, a *Benedictine Monk*, ſets forth with great juſtneſs the Advantages of Retirement, and a Contemplative Life, and is a moſt compleat Guide to it. It were to be deſired that this Work was more known to Perſons in all States, who aſpire to Perfection.——The Epiſtle of St. *Ignatius* of *Loyola* on Religious Obedience, is as compleat as any thing Profane Antiquity can ſhow in that kind of writing.——*Cardinal Bona* has the elegance of a polite Writer, the good Senſe of a Philoſopher, and the piety of a Saint. His

Treatiſes * *concerning the Liturgy and Divine Offices* ſhow his profound inſight into all ſacred Antiquity, and are no leſs curious and entertaining than inſtructive. You cannot fail of being highly pleaſed and edified with the Works of this pious and learned Perſonage, who was one of the chief Ornaments of the *Ciſtercian* Order, and a worthy Diſciple of his great Maſter, St. *Bernard*.

The Authors I have mentioned are more than ſufficient to inform you of that better way, that holy and chaſt Diſcipline, which becomes a Chriſtian and a Clergy-man; and a greater Detail would not ſuit the Deſign of this Diſcourſe. What *Seneca* ſays of Learning and Books in general, † 'that a moderate 'ſhare of the firſt is ſufficient in order to attain a right way of thinking; and that 'there are certain Authors, to whoſe Works 'we ſhould inure and habituate our ſelves,' is particularly applicable to thoſe who treat

* *De Rebus Liturgicis & de Officiis Divinis.*

† Paucis Litteris opus eſt ad bonam mentem. Certis Ingeniis immorari & innutriri oportet.

of

of the Science of the Saints. Be converſant therefore with a few, but let thoſe be excellent; and if you ſhould ſometimes look into others, return again to the former: Your Acquaintance may be general, but your Intimates ſhould be few.

I HAVE remarked that ſeveral of the moſt celebrated amongſt the Ancients have had ſome favourite Author, who was always excellent in his kind: and that two Conſiderations ſeem to have determined the Reader's choice; his own Genius and Profeſſion, which in prudent and great Men always go together. Thus, to bring a few Inſtances from profane Hiſtory, *Scipio Africanus* was addicted to *Xenophon's Inſtruction of Cyrus*, *Brutus* to *Polybius*; *Demoſthenes* tranſcribed all *Thucydides* ſeveral times; and we are all informed how much *Cicero*, as a Speaker, ſtudied *Demoſthenes*, and *Plato*, both as an Orator and Philoſopher. The ſame Method has been practiſed in the Arts, with the ſame ſucceſs; and every body has heard of the unwearied inſpection *Michael Angelo* gave to a fine, though maimed Antique Statue, which made

made his Contemporaries call it, *his School.* And, perhaps, the Figure which each of theſe made in their ſeveral Profeſſions, may, in great meaſure, be owing to the judiciouſneſs of the Choice, and a patient attention to an Original ſo choſen. And, to bring this Obſervation home to thoſe who have excelled in Chriſtian Virtues, I have read of St. *Ignatius,* that he had only two books in his Chamber, at his death, which were the *New Teſtament* and *the Imitation of Chriſt.*

* The next Conſideration, is *Church Hiſtory,* which makes the *Third* Branch or Diviſion of Eccleſiaſtical Learning. I am of opinion the Order of this Study requires you ſhould begin with what concerns the General Hiſtory of the Church; and then go on to that of your own Nation. Theſe, without doubt, are what you are moſt concerned to be acquainted with. Next to theſe, the Hiſtory of the ſeveral *Religious Orders* ſeems moſt to deſerve our Obſervation. You may after-

* Etenim viri omnes docti conſentiunt rudes omnino Theologos illos eſſe, in quorum Lucubrationibus Hiſtoria muta eſt. *Mel. Canus de locis Theol.* l. 11. c. 2.

wards, as occaſion ſerves, inform your ſelf of thoſe Facts, to which your other Studies, or your own Inclination may lead you. On this Head, no one Method can be preſcribed to all Perſons, nay there may be, perhaps, as many different Methods, and all uſeful, as there are Genius's. Reflexion and Experience will lead you into ſeveral Particulars, and a more profitable Detail than Books, or even the Advice of intelligent Perſons can extend to.

You cannot, I think, make a more judicious acquaintance with the general Hiſtory of the Church, than by beginning with *Tillemont's Memoirs*, which are extremely accurate, and contain a compleat Account of all Eccleſiaſtical Tranſactions during the five firſt Centuries; for the Work comes down no lower. The Criticiſm is judicious and modeſt, and yet ingenuous and liberal; the Language and Stile highly adapted to the Subject; and though, for the moſt part, it be little more than a literal tranſlation of a vaſt number of different Original Authors, yet it is pure and uniform. The Account

both

both of Perſons, Writings, and Facts, is ſo well atteſted, that it is alone a Library, with reſpect to the Subject and Time it treats of. It muſt, however, be acknowledged that ſome Parts of the Three laſt Tomes, which death prevented the Author from putting a finiſhing hand to, fall far ſhort of the correctneſs of the reſt of the Work. I would likewiſe adviſe you to read his *Memoirs of the Emperors*, who reigned through the ſame Period, becauſe they reflect a great light on thoſe of the Church.

I HAVE been told there are ſome exceptionable Paſſages in his Eccleſiaſtical *Memoirs*. I confeſs I do not reflect to have obſerved any, which regard Faith or Morals. However, I ſubmit my Judgment to thoſe who have greater Abilities and Diſcernment. I would have every thing elſe I advance in this Diſcourſe, underſtood with the ſame Reſtriction. I need not aſſure you of my unfeigned Deference to that Authority, which *Jeſus Chriſt* has eſtabliſhed; and that I look on Books and Tenets in no other Light, than that in which this Heavenly-directed Guide

conſiders them.——*Fleury's Church Hiſtory*, which ends with the year 1414, is certainly a very valuable and entertaining Work: The Choice of Facts, the Extracts from the Writings of the *Fathers*, and the eaſe and fluency of the Stile, make it well worth reading. I own, it is not exempt from faults; the chief of which ſeems to be, too great a propenſity to Cenſure. This Diſpoſition in Writers, ſometimes, does not only appear in particular Paſſages, but diffuſes itſelf through a whole Work, and gives a certain air, which very much alters the whole face of things. There are, I know, Perſons of underſtanding and learning, who take this to be the caſe of *Fleury*'s Hiſtory in general; for my own part, after having read it with great attention, though I think the Obſervation applicable, in a Degree, to ſome Parts of the Work, I can by no means think it the Character of the Whole. I don't pretend to juſtify ſome ſentiments and expreſſions, which are leſs exact and reſpectful than the Perſons and Subjects this Hiſtorian treats of, had a right to; and I honour that Piety which I am perſuaded had ſo great a ſhare

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in the Cenſures which have been paſſed on him. Upon the whole, did I not think that what I have ſaid of this Author, would be taken as an admonition to read him with caution, I would adviſe all, but perſons of very ſteady minds, to lay him aſide.——I ſhould chuſe to learn the Hiſtory of the *Old Teſtament*, and whatever concerns the General Tranſactions of Mankind, from the Creation to the Birth of *Chriſt*, from *Salianus*'s *Annals* abridged by himſelf, preferably to any other Writer: And this not only on account of the copious and well digeſted Matter, which is the Subject of the Work, but likewiſe of the eaſy and unaffected air of good Senſe and Religion with which the Author relates Facts and makes his Reflexions on them.——*Spondanus's Abridgment of Baronius* takes in the Dates of the Chriſtian *Æra*, and will be very ſatisfactory to thoſe Readers who want leiſure or inclination to go through the whole Work of the Great Church Annaliſt.——*The Hiſtory of the Bible*, by *Calmet*, is a judicious Performance: and that *of the People of God*, by *Berruier*, extremely polite, and (excuſe ſome worldly ſtains) not leſs calcu-

lated to inſtruct than pleaſe.——* The Account of the *Councils*, by the learned *Cabaſſutius*, anſwers the purpoſe it was deſigned for. ——*Sulpitius*'s Sacred Hiſtory is an admirable Epitome of the Tranſactions of the *Old Teſtament*, and of what happened under the Law of Grace for the firſt four hundred years. And next to that elegant Writer I think we may place *Turſellini*.——You might reproach me with an inexcuſable omiſſion did I not mention a Work, which will greatly contribute to make the Study of Church Hiſtory beneficial, and let you ſee the Chain of Providence in all the divine Diſpenſations from the Creation to the year 800 of the Chriſtian *Epoch*, accompanied with the moſt proper Reflexions to enlarge the mind, and a moſt judicious Collection of all the memorable Events during that long ſeries of Ages: All this is but a part of what *Boſſuet* has executed in a manner ſuperior to all other Writers, in his *Diſcourſe on Univerſal Hiſtory*.—— This wonderful Performance was undertaken at the ſuggeſtion of the Duke of *Montauſier*, for the uſe of the *Dauphin*, that His illuſ-

* *Notitia Conciliorum.*

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trious Pupil might, in this ſingle Picture, behold the Hiſtory of all Times and all Nations; not ſo much with an intent to learn the ſucceſſion of Ages, the duration of Empires, and thoſe aſtoniſhing Revolutions which have deſtroyed them all, one after another: as to obſerve, and feel, as it were, the Conduct of the Almighty, in making all theſe Changes ſubſervient to the glory of his Name, and the eſtabliſhment of that Worſhip, by which he would be honoured. 'Tis hard to ſay which of the Parts of this inimitable *Piece* moſt deſerves our admiration; whether the boldneſs of the *Deſign*, or the diſpoſition of the innumerable *Figures* of which it is compoſed, or the lively and natural *Expreſſion* which animates them, or that beautiful *Whole* which an incredible variety conſpires to form, by meeting all in one Point, which is the Holy Religion we profeſs.—* *The Policy grounded on the Scriptures and extracted from them*, may be conſidered as an Appendix to the *Diſcourſe on Univerſal Hiſtory*; both being wrote on the ſame Plan and with the ſame View. Theſe Works will, moreover, lay open to every in-

* Politique tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte.

telligent perſon the important Art of reading ſo as to profit by it: which the generality of Scholars ſeem never to have learnt, or to have forgot.——All the Writings of this Author are ſmooth, ſententious, and correct; and diſtinguiſhed by that delicacy and agreeable Sprightlineſs, which was peculiar to the *Athenians*.——The * *Chronological and Dogmatical Memoirs, with Reflexions and Critical Remarks*, contain a very curious and intereſting Detail of all the remarkable Occurrences in the Church from the year 1600 to 1716. The particular Articles are related with a conciſeneſs and perſpicuity which thoroughly informs, without ever tiring the Reader. This poliſhed Performance makes no more than four Pocket Volumes.

THE Works already mentioned will convince you that the Object of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory is one of the greateſt and moſt noble that can be propoſed to the mind of Man. For what can be more wonderful than to ſee Religion always ſubſiſt on the ſame Princi-

* *Memoirs Chronologiques & Dogmatiques depuis* 1600 *juſqu'en* 1716.

ples;

ples; that neither Idolatry or Impiety, which have encompaſſed her on every ſide; nor Tyrants, who have perſecuted; nor Hereticks or Infidels, who have endeavoured to corrupt her; nor Apoſtates, who have deſerted her; nor unworthy Followers, whoſe vices have diſhonoured her; nor, laſtly, length of time, which brings all human things to a period, have ever been able, I do not ſay to overthrow, but even to alter any one Point of her belief or worſhip? In ſpite of the Oppoſition ariſing from all theſe various Cauſes, the *Law* ſhe has publiſhed, has been received as holy, equitable and beneficent; as full of decency and wiſdom, of forecaſt and ſimplicity; and as the only true band of Society between Man and Man, and of that more ſacred Union between Man and God: that is, as having every Qualification by which *Legiſlature* can be recommended. Supported by the ſame Almighty Power, from which ſhe derives her Origin, ſhe has continued the ſame thorough all the different States of the People of God: under the Law of Nature and the *Patriarchs*; under *Moſes* and the written Law; under *David* and the *Prophets*;

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after the return of the *Jews* from their captivity, to the coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſince, under *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, that is, under the Law of Grace and the Goſpel: In the Ages, in which the *Meſſiah* was looked for, and in thoſe which have ſeen this expectation fulfilled; when the Worſhip of God was confined to one People, and when, according to the ancient Prophecies, it was to be ſpread over all the Earth; when infirm and carnal Men ſtood in need of temporal rewards and puniſhments; and when, actuated by more exalted motives, they lived by Faith and the proſpect of good things beyond this ſtate of being. Nor can we conceive (as *Boſſuet* has obſerved on the evidence of theſe Facts) any conduct more worthy the God we adore, than, firſt, to have choſen a People, who was to be a ſtanding Monument of his Providence, whoſe various fortune was to depend on their piety, and whoſe proſperity and adverſity were to bear witneſs to his wiſdom and juſtice who governed them. This is what God was pleaſed to manifeſt in his diſpenſations towards the *Jews*. But after having eſtabliſhed, by ſo many ſenſible Proofs,

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this unſhaken foundation, that He alone directs all human Events to their appointed Ends; it was time to raiſe Men to higher expectations, and to diſcover to a new People, which was to be formed from all the Nations of the Earth, the Secrets of a future Life. —This uninterrupted Uniformity of Religion from the beginning of time down to our days, which has always acknowledged the ſame *God* as Creator and Ruler, and the ſame *Jeſus Chriſt* as Saviour of Mankind, is the very life, ſpirit, and Subſtance of the general Hiſtory of the Church, whether delivered in the inſpired or other Writings; and is, on that account, the moſt ſublime and divine Object, that ever was, or could be propoſed to the knowledge and contemplation of Man.

As to the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of our own Country, to the year 1189, *Alford*'s *Annals* are the beſt I am acquainted with. The Detail into which this Author enters, gives him an opportunity of transferring into his own Work the moſt valuable parts of the Hiſtorians, who went before him; which he

generally does in their own words. A great many Points of Controverſy are treated with much Solidity, the Truths of Religion aſſerted no leſs from Facts than Arguments, and the whole Work planned and executed for the improvement and edification of a well diſpoſed mind, eſpecially of an *Engliſh* Reader. I readily grant that ſeveral of the Memoirs the Author has made uſe of, are not ſo authentic as the Accuracy of this Age requires; but a too great Facility in admitting Facts, which ſeem to favour Piety (for the Miſtakes in this Performance are to be charged on this Head) does not hinder it from being very valuable.——*The Variations of the Proteſtant Churches*, by *Boſſuet*, inform us of many Particulars, in the knowledge of which every *Engliſh* Man is intereſted.——There are ſeveral curious Anecdotes relating to the ſame Subject, which, as you love information, will fall in your way. Some of *F. Perſons*'s Works, *Sanders of the Engliſh Schiſm*, ſome of Lord *Caſtlemaine*'s Treatiſes deſerve a place in this Liſt.——*The Councils of Great Britain*, by Sir *Henry Spelman*, are a very noble Collection, and give a juſt notion of the Church Diſcipline

Diſcipline of this Nation, and its ancient Piety; as does *Bede's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, for the ſhort Period it gives an account of, which is to the year 731: though the far greater Part is taken up with what happened after St. *Auſtin*'s arrival in 597; and what goes before concerning the *Britons*, ſeems deſigned by that venerable *Saxon*, but as an Introduction to what he was to ſay of his own Nation.

ALTHOUGH a great deal of what concerns *Religious Orders* be interwoven with the General Hiſtory of the Church, and that of your own Country, yet, did your ſituation allow leiſure for ſuch an undertaking, I would in the next place, as I have already ſaid, recommend to you a particular information of what concerns them. The conſpicuous Rank they hold in the *Hierarchy*, the great Ornament they have always been to the Church, and the many and various benefits the Chriſtian World receives from theſe Inſtitutions, make them well deſerve a ſpecial Attention.——The *Order of St. Benedict*, and that illuſtrious Branch of it which St. *Ber-*

*nard* brought back to its primitive Spirit, claim an uncommon regard and veneration from all *Engliſhmen*. The number of Foundations they poſſeſſed in our Country, the Share they had, for ſome Ages, in the Affairs of Church and State, the ſignal Services they have done to both, and the Saints which theſe excellent Schools of Virtue have produced, furniſh alone a large and important Body of Hiſtory.——The *Dominicans*, *Franciſcans*, and *Carthuſians*, the reformed Order of the *Carmelites*, of which St. *Thereſa* was the chief Inſtrument; the *Canon Regulars*, particularly the Congregation erected by *Gerard le Groote*, which flouriſhed ſo much in the fifteenth Century, * " were Men ' rich in Virtue, ſtudious of the beauty of ' Holineſs, and promoters of peace in their ' Families. All theſe obtained glory in their ' reſpective Ages, and were praiſed in their ' Days. Thoſe alſo who came after them ' have left a Name behind them, that their ' praiſes likewiſe might be recorded. As for ' the Founders themſelves, they were perſons ' eminent for good deeds, and theſe ſtill con-

* *Eccleſiaſticus*, ch. xliv.

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'tinue with their Deſcendants. Even their 'lateſt Poſterity is a holy Inheritance, which 'ſhall not fail, nor their glory be blotted 'out. Their Bodies were buried in peace, 'and their name lives from Age to Age. 'The People ſhow forth their Wiſdom, and 'the Church publiſhes their Praiſe.'

But though a particular Detail of theſe and the like Inſtitutions cannot be recommended to you at preſent, you may, without allotting too great a part of your time, make your ſelf Maſter of the Chief Heads of theſe Matters, from *the Origin of Monaſtic Inſtitutions*, and thoſe of the *Benedictines* in particular, by *Aubert le Mire*, Library Keeper to *Albert* and *Iſabella*, and one of the moſt religious and knowing Perſons in all kinds of Eccleſiaſtical Learning the *Netherlands* have ever had. I am ſorry * *the Apoſtleſhip of the Benedictines in England*, by *Reyner*, though a very valuable piece, is printed in ſuch a manner as to be ſcarcely legible.——*Bulteau's Monaſtic Hiſtory of the Eaſt* is very exact, much eſteemed, and little read. His Abridg-

* *Apoſtolatus Benedictinorum in Angliâ.*

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ment of that of the *Benedictines*, though well wrote, was not received with the approbation it deſerved.

YOUR modeſty muſt not be offended, if in the following, and ſome other Articles, I am ſomewhat particular in what concerns a Body of Men, of which you are a Member, and in whoſe commendation you will find the greateſt encouragement to proficiency, Domeſtic Example. There is a peculiar uſe and propriety in propoſing to all Perſons the Advantages and Hereditary Honours of their different Societies, and calling forth to imitation the excellent Models each of them has produced. And though I have reaſon to hope, that through the goodneſs of your own diſpoſition, and without any adventitious influence,

*Quò te cæleſtis Sapientia duceret, ires,*

Yet I cannot but think, that placing before you the Worthies of your own Family, will add new vigour to Precept, and give Direction its full weight. But not to pretend to ſway you with any thing of ſo little conſequence

quence as my own opinion, I will alledge ſuch Teſtimonies as are above all exception.

'* There is no Religious Order, ſays the 'Abbé *Lenglet du Freſnoy*, which has fur-'niſhed ſo much Matter to Hiſtory, as *the* '*Society of Jeſus*; and none likewiſe which 'has had more correct and eloquent Hiſto-'rians."——The Circumſtances of Time, in which God was pleaſed to raiſe up this Body of Men in his Church, the wonderful Sanctity and Wiſdom of their Founder, their ſurpriſing and rapid Progreſs, the infinite Good they have every where done, either in eſtabliſhing Religion, or reforming the Manners of thoſe, who were a diſcredit to it, the eminent Virtue of ſo many of their Members, particularly at their Inſtitution, will fix your Obſervation and excite your Piety as a Chriſtian, who intereſts himſelf in the common cauſe of the Goſpel. And as a young Man of Parts and Learning, you will have the additional pleaſure of perceiving that this Society alone has produced ſuch excellent and various Works in every Branch of ſacred

* *Methode pour etudier l'Hiſtoire.* Tom. 3. Art. 27.

Literature (for that only is here in Queſtion) that a great part of what we have moſt valuable on any of theſe Subjects, is owing to the Writers of that Body.

THE ſame Succeſs has attended them in the Education of Youth, and *Peter Morin*, who was one of the Reſtorers of Learning in the Pontificate of *Gregory* the XIIIth, and *Sixtus* the Vth, gives the following Character of them in his Books *of the Right Uſe of Sciences*: * 'We have an Inſtance, ſays he, of 'the right Method of Education in that il-'luſtrious Society, which is called by the 'name of *Jeſus*; the Profeſſors of this Body 'enable thoſe committed to their care, in a 'few years, to go through every Branch of 'ſacred Knowledge, Eccleſiaſtical Antiqui-'ties, Church Hiſtory, the ancient Divines,

* Exemplo ſit clariſſima nominis Jeſu Societas; quæ poſtquàm Adoleſcentes aliquot annos his in Studiis tenuit, eos ita dimittit, ut ipſi, quod aiunt, ſine cortice nare, ac immenſa Eccleſiaſticæ vetuſtatis volumina,... veteres Theologos per ſe evolvere & intelligere, perluſtrare Conciliorum varias Sanctiones, Hiſtoriaſque Eccleſiæ omnes cum admirabili utilitate ac voluptate cognoſcere poſſint. *Lib.* 3.

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'the Councils, with wonderful profit and 'pleaſure, and without any further Help 'than their own Induſtry, and the Foun-'dation they have laid in their Schools.'——

* Cardinal *Allen*, the Ornament of the *Engliſh* Clergy, has expreſſed his Sentiments in terms no leſs advantageous than thoſe of *Morin*: 'Pope *Gregory* the XIIIth, ſays he, has been 'pleaſed to make uſe of the moſt famous 'Society of the name of *Jeſus*, in the Go-'vernment of moſt of the Colleges he has 'endowed, to the eternal good of all Peo-'ple....' He likewiſe obſerves, 'That the '*Jeſuits*, for their exemplar Life and Vir-'tue, for their exceeding Exerciſe, Diligence, 'and Dexterity in the Education of Youth, 'both in Piety and Knowledge, for their 'great Learning and Diſcretion, and for 'other rare Graces of God's Spirit, were 'uſed, to the marvelous benefit of the Church, 'as well by his Holineſs, as other greateſt 'Princes of Chriſtendom, for Profeſſors in 'their Univerſities, Reformers of the de-'cayed Manners of all Sorts, and moſt ex-'quiſite Maſters of all Religion, Devotion,

* *Allen's Apology for the Engliſh Seminaries*, Ch. iii. and vi.

'and true Worſhip of God.—Lord *Bacon* 'ſeems to have been of the ſame opinion; '* That excellent Part of ancient Diſcipline, 'ſays he, which conſiſts in Education, has 'been in ſome ſort revived in late times by 'the Colleges of the *Jeſuits*, in regard of 'which, and ſome other Points concerning 'human Learning and Moral Matters, I 'may ſay, as *Ageſilaus* ſaid of his Enemy '*Pharnabaſus*, *Talis cum ſis, utinam noſter* '*eſſes*.' And in another Place of the ſame Work, he ſays, 'On the other hand, we ſee 'the *Jeſuits*, who partly in themſelves, and 'partly by the emulation and provocation of 'their Example, have much quickned and 'ſtrengthned the State of Learning; we 'ſee, I ſay, what notable ſervice and repara-'tion they have done to the *Roman See*.'——*Morin* and *Allen* had no particular Connexion with the *Society*; and the Religious opinions of the other great Perſonage were ſo oppoſite to thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, that nothing but Conviction could have drawn from him this Acknowledgment in favour of a Body of Men, who, amongſt other Com-

* *Advancement of Learning.*

mendations,

mendations, have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their zeal and attachment to it. I might add, that the flouriſhing State of their Schools in moſt Parts of *Europe*, is an Inſtance of their Ability being ſtill equal to the Reputation they at firſt acquired.

As to their Works, * *Alegambe's Catalogue of their Authors*, and Books publiſhed by them, which *du Freſnoy*, in his *Method of ſtudying Hiſtory*, prefers to any thing which has yet appeared in that kind, may be of great uſe to you: as *Bellarmine*'s ſhort but excellent *Treatiſe of Eccleſiaſtical Writers*, will give a proper and ſufficient light on the extenſive Subjects he there examines. *Philip Labbe* has wrote a *Philological and Hiſtorical Diſſertation* on this Work, which is much eſteemed. *Sixtus Senenſis's Holy Library* is ſomething of the ſame nature, but on a larger Plan than *Bellarmine*'s; as is alſo the *Select Library* of *Poſſevine*, and the *Eccleſiaſtical* of *Aubert le Mire*. And if there be any Writer, whoſe Character you deſire to be informed of, and which is not to be met with in the

* *Bibliotheca Scriptorum, S. J.*

above-mentioned Works, you may have recourſe to any other Hiſtorical Dictionary.—For my own part, I have always endeavoured to get a juſt Notion both of the Author and his Subject, before I began to read the Work; and this, when I was not acquainted with the Remark of a celebrated Critic. * 'Two 'things, ſays he, greatly contribute to keep 'up our Attention, and let us into the Senſe 'of what we read; The Knowledge of the 'Author's Character and Subject: for the 'Diſpoſition we bring to reading, and the 'Opinion we have imbibed of the Writer 'have a greater influence on our judgment 'than is eaſily imagined.'

THIS is what I had to ſay on *Church Hiſtory*, as well General as Particular. I have often thought there is nothing more unprofitable than this Study as it is commonly undertaken,

* Duæ res ſunt quæ vehementer & accendunt ad lectionem, & conducunt ad intellectum voluminis, vita Authoris cognita, & operis non ignoratum argumentum. Plurimum enim refert quem animum adferas ad legendum, nec facile dictu ſit quantum in judicando momenti habeat præſumpta de homine Opinio. *Eraſmus.*

dertaken, whereas nothing would be more uſeful, was it purſued as it ought to be. To ſtudy Hiſtory, is to ſtudy the Motives, the Opinions, the Paſſions of Men, in order to be acquainted with all their Springs and Windings, all the Illuſions by which they blind the Underſtanding and ſurprize the Heart. It is to know our ſelves in other people; to diſcover in the Wiſe and Virtuous, by what we may improve; and in thoſe of another Character, what we are to ſhun; and, in general, how we are to behave in all the various Incidents of Life. The Reſult therefore of this Science is to know Mankind, who are the Subject of it. Where theſe Diſpoſitions are wanting, Hiſtory, which *Cicero* very deſervedly ſtiles * 'the Regiſter of Time, 'the Ray of Truth, the Life of the Me-'mory, the Guide of Life, the Meſſenger of 'Antiquity,' even the Hiſtory of the Church, will only give us a vain Idea of our own Sufficiency, and make us miſtake a very trifling and ſuperficial Knowledge for real Improvement.

* Teſtis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriæ, magiſtra vitæ, nuncia vetuſtatis.

Books of Piety, whenever wrote, being, as I have already obſerved, an Appendix to the Works of the *Fathers*; the Lives of holy Men muſt, ſtrictly ſpeaking, be ſo many Branches of Church Hiſtory, no leſs than the Perſons themſelves are of that *Tree of Life*, by which the *Church* itſelf is frequently repreſented.——Saint *Bernard*'s, which was wrote by his Contemporaries and Diſciples, gives us the higheſt Idea of the Saint's Actions and Virtues, and makes his Works more entertaining and profitable. The Author of the firſt Part, *William*, Abbot of St. *Thierry*, was one of the greateſt and moſt holy Perſonages of his time, to whom we are beholden for that incomparable Treatiſe *on Solitude*, addreſſed to the *Carthuſians* of *Mont-Dieu*, which is always printed with St. *Bernard*'s Works. ——The Lives of the Saints *Ignatius*, *Xavier*, *Francis Borgia*, and Cardinal *Bellarmine*, by *Bouhours*, *Verjus*, and *Friſon*, are not only wrote with a Spirit becoming the Sanctity of the Subject, but may be juſtly ranked amongſt the fineſt Compoſitions of the *French*, or any other language.—That of St. *Martin* by *Sulpitius*, with his *Dialogues on the Virtues of the Eaſtern*

*Eaſtern Monks*, are Proofs that ſacred Subjects admit of all the Elegance of the *Latin* Tongue; as is that of St. *Ignatius*, by *Maffeus*.—There is an affecting air of Piety in the Lives of St. *Lewis Gonzaga*, and *John Berchman*, by *Ceparius*; and in that lately publiſhed by *Daubenton*, of St. *J. F. Regis*. * *The Enlightned Shepherd*, by *Colombiere*, joins the moſt ſublime Holineſs to the innocence and ſimplicity of a Paſtoral Life.——*Thomas à Kempis* has given us an account of ſeveral *Canon-Regulars*, with whom he lived, in the ſame artleſs Stile that recommends his other Works.—The Life of *Mabillon*, by *Ruinart*, his Scholar; and that of *Leſſius*, wrote by *Schoofs*, a *Canon-Regular*, though publiſhed by *Curtois*, muſt have the approbation of every Reader, who is pleaſed to ſee the ſame Perſons equally eminent for Learning and Religion.——That of *Don Bartholomew*, the holy Archbiſhop of *Brague*, repreſents in one Perſon the double Character of a perfect Religious Man, and a zealous and laborious Prelate: it was publiſhed by the *Dominicans* of *Paris*, of whoſe *Order* he was.——And,

* *Le Berger illuminé.*

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to mention the Life of one Saint of the other Sex, that of St. *Thereſa*, wrote by herſelf, affords ſuch Inſtances of frequent and ſublime Communications of the Holy Spirit, as muſt neceſſarily improve, raiſe and refine a Mind capable of ſuch Leſſons; nor can any Work be better tranſlated than this is into *French*, not by *d'Andilly*, but *Chanut*.— As all theſe are great Originals, I ſhall put down no more: A curſory View of ſuch Pieces, and which does little more than gratify Curioſity, is not the way to reap the Advantage deſigned in propoſing them for our Example and Imitation. They are to be ſtudied with that accuracy and attention which Artiſts employ on excellent Patterns, to raiſe their own Genius and bring their Works to the ſame Standard. For I muſt apply to this ſort of reading, the ſame Obſervation I have already made on the Treatiſes of Chriſtian Morality; the only Difference between theſe two Kinds of Writing being, that the Former teaches by Precept, this by Example.— "The Reaſon we reap ſo little Benefit from "Reading, ſays a wiſe Heathen,* is, becauſe

* *Epictetus apud Arianum*, l. iv. c. 4.

"we

'we read only with a View to Know, and 'do not refer our Studies to Action and the 'Conduct of our Lives.' And another informs us, '* that the Intent of Reading is 'to raiſe an Emulation of the virtuous Ac-'tions we approve in others, and make our 'own Advantage of the Wiſdom of their 'Obſervations and Sayings.'

† I AM now come to the *Fourth* and laſt Branch of Eccleſiaſtical Learning, which is *Divinity*, properly ſo called, and as it is diſtinguiſhed from the *Scriptures*, *Fathers*, and *Church Hiſtory*, which, in a more qualified and rational, though leſs general acceptation of the word, make up ſo great a part of all Chriſtian and ſacred Knowledge, and conſequently of *Divinity*.—I need not inform you that one may be Maſter of the *Divinity Lec-*

* *Macrob.* l. 5. *Saturn.* c. i.

† Ad divini auctoritatem verbi accedat Theologica Ratiocinatio, quæ partim è ſacris illis oraculis, tanquam primariis principiis; partim ex communibus notionibus, & inſitâ humanæ intelligentiæ luce cognitis efflorescit. *Petavius, Dog. Theol.* Tom. IV. l. 8. c. 7. §. 3.

*tures*

*tures* which are given in the Schools, and even give an account of them in Public with applauſe, and yet leave the Univerſity very ill provided of that Science. And this I know to have been the Caſe of ſeveral. A Miſtake in a thing of ſuch Moment cannot be ſufficiently lamented in thoſe who have been led into it, or too carefully avoided by Perſons who have that Career yet to begin. The Origin of it I take to be a Miſ-apprehenſion of what *Divinity* really is, which is taken up at the firſt ſetting out, and holds on to the Journey's end. A young Divine is taught to look upon it as the Height of Merit in his Profeſſion to be able to maintain whatever his Profeſſor has advanced, and refute or evade all the Objections brought againſt it. This alone is frequently all the Fruit of four Years Application, and is attended with great Ignorance and ſometimes with a ſupercilious Contempt of whatever is not contained in his Profeſſor's Writings. In this manner, a Reputation of Knowledge is owing to the prevailing Miſtakes about it, and Students of very good Abilities have often given themſelves little or no trouble to be Learned to the purpoſe,

purpoſe, to be truly and uſefully Knowing, from a falſe Notion of being ſo already.

THE *Divinity Lectures* which are given in the Schools are but the Out-Lines of this Science, which muſt afterwards be filled up, the different Parts drawn out and diſtinguiſhed, the Colouring added, and the whole Piece perfected. When this is done, thoſe Out-Lines, which, as in a Picture, guided the whole Work, begin to diſappear, and are at length loſt in ſomething more compleat; and the Piece is never ſeen to ſo great an Advantage, as when the Delineations, by which it was perfected, are removed out of ſight. You, who have already gone through a Courſe of *Scholaſtic Philoſophy*, which is delivered in the ſame manner as *Divinity*, muſt be ſenſible of the truth of this Obſervation.

As I am a great friend to Method and regular Inſtitutions, I cannot but approve that Students in *Divinity* ſhould write the Heads of the ſeveral Subjects they are to learn. This Method fixes their Attention, and makes a more laſting Impreſſion than

reading alone can do; And as it is the received Practice in Univerſities, I am willing to look on it as the moſt beneficial: Though as to the manner of giving theſe Heads, I ſhall reſerve my opinion to a more convenient place of this Diſcourſe. Your firſt care, therefore, ſhould be to be well acquainted with your Profeſſor's Lectures: Duty and a Deference to eſtabliſhed Rules require this, and theſe Motives are ſufficient, though others were wanting. But then this does not oblige you to ſit down ſatisfied with the Knowledge theſe Lectures convey, and not to ſeek elſewhere what may ſupply their Deficiency. The Foundations are laid, and the Scaffolds raiſed, and this ſhould put you in mind to finiſh the Building. If you aſk, how this is to be effected? I anſwer, that a good deal depends on the Teacher, but much more on the Learner. If the Profeſſor, as occaſion ſerved, would read ſome ſhort and remarkable Paſſages of the *Fathers*, and of the moſt able School-Divines on the ſeveral Subjects of his Leſſons, this Variety would awaken the attention of his Scholars, enlarge their Minds, and prevent that narrow and

low way of thinking on the moſt exalted Matters, which a ſervile and diſagreeable Attachment to a Profeſſor's Lectures is apt to produce. Thus, for Example, when he treats of the Church, he might bring them acquainted with *Tertullian*, concerning *Præſcription againſt Heretics*; with St. *Cyprian*, on *the Unity of the Church*; with St. *Auſtin*, on *the True Religion*, *Vincent* of *Lerins*, and *Campian's Reaſons given to the Univerſity-Men.* ——He might, on other occaſions, diverſify his Lectures by ſome choſen Paſſages of *Eſtius*, on *the Maſter of Sentences*, which is a moſt excellent Work, and quite adapted to the Method of the Schools, which, perhaps, have ſeen nothing more perfect in its kind; or of *Melchior Canus*'s *Common-places of Divinity*; or of the *Councils*, the Letters of the Popes, of the Theological Works of *Petavius*, *Leſſius*, *du Hamel* and others. But then he ought to chuſe theſe Paſſages with Diſcernment, and make his Auditory remark their propriety, ſtrength and uſefulneſs; for otherwiſe, the mere reading them will be but dry and unprofitable. *Mabillon* ſays, he knew

this

this method to have been practiſed by a very able Profeſſor with great Succeſs.

But as all the Advantages which can be reaped from this or any other Induſtry of the Teacher will fall far ſhort of the Progreſs a young Man of good Parts may make; his own Diligence muſt ſupply the reſt. Now this is to be compaſſed chiefly by reading: and as the Books which have been wrote on *Divinity* are almoſt, in the literal Senſe of the Word, infinite, your great care ſhould be to read ſuch only as are excellent.

Indeed, if a judicious Choice of Authors be, in general, the firſt and principal Step towards real Improvement, it is more particularly neceſſary in a Matter ſo ſerious and important as the ſtudy of *Divinity*. An endleſs multitude of Works (I have already ſaid it, and I repeat it again, that ſo neceſſary a Caution may have its full influence) have been wrote on all the Diviſions of this Science, with great Gravity, and in all the Forms of Argumentation, which ſay and

teach

teach little to the Purpoſe; and whoever employs his time and thoughts on ſuch kind of Reading, is much in the ſame caſe with a Huſbandman, who inſtead of cultivating a fertile Soil ſhould till barren Sands. What *Quintilian*, therefore, ſays of a *Grammarian*, let us apply to a *Divine*; *Mihi inter virtutes Grammatici habebitur, Aliqua Neſcire.*

THERE is a Point of Perfection in Science, as of Goodneſs and Maturity in Nature. Thoſe Writers who perceive and attain it, have a true Taſte; thoſe, who perceive it not, and either fall ſhort of, or go beyond it, have a faulty one. But by a ſtrange and unhappy Fatality, to which all Human Productions are ſubject, this Juſtneſs and Diſcernment is ſcarce ever attained, and things brought to Perfection, but they begin, almoſt as ſoon, to fall from it; and right Notions being gradually worn away, where one Miſtake has entered, Legions have found their way through the ſame Breach. What has added to the Misfortune, is, that whereas Men riſe by ſlow Degrees to this Ripeneſs; when they have once loſt it, the Recovery is very diffi-

cult, and many Ages have ſometimes paſt, before they have been brought back to reliſh that genuine Goodneſs, from which they wantonly departed. And whoever imagines that *Theology*, conſidered as a Science, has been exempted from theſe general Revolutions, is an utter Stranger to the State of Eccleſiaſtical Learning, from its firſt Inſtitution to our Days. I cannot produce a ſtronger, and, at the ſame time, a more melancholy Proof of this Aſſertion, than by ſetting before you a ſuccinct View of what has happened to *School-Divinity*.——When St. *Thomas* of *Aquin* appeared in the thirteenth Century, he found this Science much degenerated from the Plan, according to which St. *John Damaſcen* had modelled it in the eighth, and which *Peter* of *Lombardy* had revived 400 years after. But being endowed with a ſuperior Underſtanding, and more extenſive Knowledge than his Predeceſſors, he gave School-learning a perfection it had not yet received, and of which the others had only traced imperfect Sketches. Indefatigable induſtry, a moſt conſummate ſkill in the *Scriptures*, *Councils*, and *Fathers*, a great inſight

into

into the Philoſophy of *Plato* and *Ariſtotle*; and, more than all the reſt, that aſſiſtance which is derived from Prayer and Sanctity of Manners, enabled him to withſtand the wretched method of Studies which then prevailed, and to compile his *Sum*, which is an Abridgment of all his Works, his Maſterpiece, and the greateſt effort of genius and erudition the Church had ſeen for many Ages. And whoever conſiders the diſadvantages he had to ſtruggle with, the wild heap of barbarous Rubbiſh, which ſurrounded him, and the early period of a life of only forty-eight years, far from being offended that his Works have not that finiſhed air, which in other circumſtances he would not have failed to have given them, muſt acknowledge his merit equal to what I have ſaid of it.—— But School Learning no ſooner began to appear fair and accompliſhed in this great Original, but it quickly changed its form under thoſe who followed him. Theſe reſtleſs ſpirits inſtead of endeavouring at a Perfection, which he had pointed out, and made ſuch advances towards it, copied only his blemiſhes; the minuteneſs and multiplicity of his diſ-

quiſitions, and a want of that correctneſs, which is the reſult of Criticiſm, and thoſe Attainments which are preparatory to it. Thus, far from advancing Theology, they did but encumber it more. The pretence, indeed, was to refine on the Method, the *Angel of the School*, as he is deſervedly ſtyled, had laid down; but the Succeſs was like that of the *Viper*'s attempt, in the *Fable*, who poliſhed his Tongue on the Smith's file till he wore it away. They perplexed Truth inſtead of clearing it up, baniſhed and deſpiſed uſeful Knowledge, introduced a falſe taſte of Learning, and, which was ſtill a more capital Diſorder, by purſuing with Zeal and Obſtinacy fruitleſs Inquiries and endleſs Cavils they extinguiſhed, by degrees, the ſpirit of Piety towards God, and that of Peace amongſt one another. Study, even that of the moſt ſerious Subjects, was no longer conſidered as a means to become wiſer and better Chriſtians, but ſharper Diſputants; and was employed, not to remove Uncertainties, but to increaſe them *. And as in *Muſic*, fanciful diviſions, and

* Ergo indagandi veri una & ſimplex via, eſt relicta; faciendi fuci apertæ ſexcentæ. Nec ſolùm in hanc opinionem

and light and uneven Quirks have been introduced in order to ſhew the Hand of the Performer, to the Neglect of real Harmony; and the Ears alone been tickled with what ought to have raiſed, or tempered, or allayed every affection of the Soul: ſo, the excellence and uſe of *Theology* was laid aſide, and its whole merit transferred to Knacks and Subtilties; which ſhewed the Quickneſs of the Diſputant, to the prejudice of what was moſt valuable and uſeful in the Science.——This was the too general face of the Schools, when the Dawn of Science began to open on the World about the end of the fourteenth Century, and to promiſe Day.

nem populus cucurrit, finem diſcendi eſſe diſputare, ut militiæ conflictum: verùm publicus conſenſus permultos Veteranos & quaſi Triarios Scholaſticæ militiæ rapuit; ut ſupervacaneum eſſe ac ſtultum cenſeant, ſi quis *ad mentem & mores & quietum hoc inquirendi genus* Philoſophiam revocet. *Vivés, de cauſis corruptarum artium*, L. 1.

Verterunt ad *altercationes* diſciplinam morum, quæ ad *agendum* eſſet parata; & ſic tractarunt, non ut *meliores* vel fierent vel facerent; nec ut *rectè* ſtatuerent de virtutibus & vitâ, ſed ut *cavillarentur*. *Idem*, L. 5.

The Writers of the *Society* of *Jeſus* have the advantage to have appeared when uſeful and ſolid Learning was revived, after an almoſt univerſal Lethargy of ſome Ages; and have been themſelves ſome of the chief Reſtorers of it. This makes the Language of their eminent Writers ſo correct, their Method ſo clear, their Tenets ſo exact; in a word, their Works ſo compleat. They likewiſe write uniformly, which is a great help to the Learner. Beſides, thoſe amongſt them who have excelled in Eccleſiaſtical Literature, have had, for the moſt part, another ineſtimable advantage of joining great ſanctity of Manners to the moſt conſummate knowledge, and their lives, no leſs than their Works, have been the cleareſt Commentaries on the Scriptures, and the moſt ſublime Leſſons of Theology.

The Trophies of *Marathon* (for I muſt here reſume what I touched on above) which awakened all the military genius of *Themiſtocles:* and the encouragement to laudable Undertakings, which *Q. Maximus* and *P. Scipio*, two of the greateſt Men of *Rome*, acknow-

acknowledged they received from the Images of their Anceſtors, are a leſſon to a Student, ſo well read in Claſſic Learning as you are, of the force of home-bred Example. And when you reflect that *Auguſtus* adorned the *Porticos* of his *Forum* with nothing but the Statues of the moſt celebrated *Roman* Generals, with a view, as he declared, to excite in himſelf and ſucceeding Princes an Emulation of the like Exploits; you muſt feel, that a *Society*, which makes a particular profeſſion of Learning, and has ſupported that claim by ſuch various Patterns of Excellence, has a right to animate all its Members by an Authority of much greater weight than that of *Auguſtus*; *Be mindful, O my Sons, of the Deeds of your Forefathers from Age to Age, and you ſhall obtain great glory, and a Name which will remain for ever**.

WHOEVER is converſant with the actions and writings of the Perſons I am ſpeaking of, will know the Character here given of them, to be grounded on ſomething more ſubſtantial than *Partiality*. True Merit is

* *Maccabees*, l. 1. c. 2.

the Foundation, which nothing can ſhake. As you have received your Education amongſt them, your future Proficiency will be chiefly owing to the Principles they inſtilled, and, in ſome meaſure, to the Authors their School has produced. * But if your Progreſs in Literature be the only, or even the chief Advantage you reap from this Inſtitution, give me leave to ſay, you will fall ſhort, very ſhort of what is, on ſo many Titles, expected of you. There is, as I have already intimated, a higher Attainment, and of quite another importance, in which theſe great Men are not leſs able Maſters than in the Sciences; and in which a ſuitable Proficiency will be expected from you. To conquer the reluctancy of

* Hortabor & rogabo, ut hoc curſu quo cœpiſti, ad ſummam laudem ſic contendas & enitare, ut ſtatuas, tibi hominum expectationem non modò explendam, ſed omnibus partibus & numeris abſolutiſſimæ Virtutis etiam ſuperandam eſſe.... optimèque id & commodiſſimè fiet, ſi bonorum morum velut firmo fundamento ſubſtrato, ſtudia deinde & genera doctrinarum ita ſuper extrues, ut in eligendis, quæ opportuniſſimæ ſint, & in addiſcendis quatenus poſſunt eſſe utiles, non ſolùm curâ atque conſilio, ſed divinâ etiam ſorte quâdam adjuvêre. *Sadolet, ad Ran. Farneſium, Card.*

corrupt

corrupt Nature, to advance daily in Virtue, to purify your Intentions, and perfect your Actions; and gradually refine and ennoble your Mind with every Chriſtian Diſpoſition, are the genuine and peculiar Leſſons you are to learn from this Diſcipline.

I SHALL conſider the Authors of this Body, as well as the others I recommend to you, with a view to that Branch of the Science, which I am now treating of; after having ſaid a word or two, in general, on the different manner of conveying it.—— There are two Methods of teaching *Divinity*, one ancient, the other modern: the former admits of moſt of the ornaments of Diſcourſe; the latter, more ſevere, ſeems to have laid aſide eloquence, and aimed only at being exact and ſubtil. This Difference in the Manner of delivering the Science, has given occaſion to the Diviſion of the Science itſelf into *Poſitive*, and *Speculative* or *Scholaſtic*: the firſt being ſuppoſed to be confined to the ancient method, the ſecond to the modern. Thus what *Socrates* ſaid concerning thoſe, who ſeparated *Intereſt* and *Virtue*, ſeems, in

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ſome meaſure, to have happened to them, who made this Diſtinction in *Theology*, viz. * to have made a Divorce between things, which *by Nature were deſigned to go together*. One, however, might very well be tempered by the other, and *Divinity* become exact without preciſeneſs, and copious and agreeable without being florid and diffuſe.

It is obſerved to the praiſe of St. *Athanaſius* and ſeveral of the ancient *Fathers*, that they propoſe their Arguments very gracefully, and with great clearneſs: that their manner of Reaſoning is cloſe and concluſive; that they uſe the moſt proper Terms to explain the Myſteries of our Religion, and clear up Difficulties in a plain Manner, and void of thoſe Refinements which often ſhow the Subtlety of the Reaſoner, without elucidating the Subject. By this Method, the ancient and modern Schools of *Divinity* might be allied, and receive a reciprocal luſtre and ſtrength from each other: the Latter would be exempt from Cavils and Drineſs, and the Former poſſeſs all their Richneſs with a Di-

* Naturâ cohærentia opinione diſtraxerunt. *Cicero.*

ſtinction

ſtinction and Order, which would inhance their merit and place it in a more uſeful light.

We have an illuſtrious Inſtance of this in the *Theological Works* of *Petavius*, in which *Poſitive* and *Scholaſtic Divinity*, without confounding their ſeveral Properties, conſpire to ſet off each other, and are moreover joined to all the Advantages of Profane and *Jewiſh* Erudition.——This great Man treats his Subject in the moſt clear and natural Order, employs no Terms which can cauſe Ambiguity, advances no Principles which he does not purſue, and only Reaſons in order to conclude. By this means he intereſts and fixes the attention of a Reader who is diſengaged from Prejudice, who is ſtudious, patient, attentive and reaſonable. When he has laid down his Poſitions, he leads his Scholar, ſtep by ſtep, to all their Proofs, bears him company all the way, and does not leave him till he is ſatisfied. As his Knowledge was, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, Univerſal, and, as Abbé *Olivet* ſays, * *beyond the bounds*

* Ultra humanam ſortem eruditus. *Olivet, Præf. in Cicer.*

*which*

*which Nature ſeems to have ſet to Man*, and his Genius equal to his Knowledge, his Works are enriched with every kind of ſacred Literature, which either paſt or preſent Times could furniſh. He is not *fraught with the Spoils of the Eaſt* only, as the *Poet* ſays of his *Hero*, but with thoſe of the four Quarters of the World: all which he has digeſted into admirable Order, and adorned with an Eloquence truly becoming the Dignity of his Subject. And as all theſe Advantages meet in one Writer, and, perhaps, in him alone, I am inclined to think his Works ſufficient to form a compleat Syſtem of *Poſitive* and *Speculative Divinity*, both with reſpect to the copiouſneſs of the matter they contain, and the method, penetration and judgment with which it is treated: I mean, as far as the Work goes; for Death prevented his finiſhing above half of the *Body of Divinity*, of which he has given the Plan at the end of his Preliminary Diſcourſes.

And here it may be ſeaſonable to ſay ſomething of the different Parts which compoſe *Divinity*; how many and what they are, and

the connexion they have with one another. You are not to expect an univerſal agreement amongſt the Learned on this Head, and that Perſons of great, and even equal Abilities, ſhould have the ſame notions of Order and Gradation in this divine Science any more than in others.——The moſt accurate and full Diviſion of it ſeems to be this: That the *Firſt* Part ſhould treat of the *Divine Nature and Perfections*, conſidered in themſelves; and this takes in the Treatiſes of *God*, his *Attributes*, and of the *Trinity*. The *Second* Part contains thoſe Works which flow from Him, as the Author of Nature, and which are two-fold, Spiritual and Corporal; this Part contains the Treatiſes of the *Angels*, the *Creation* of the viſible World, and particularly of Man. That moſt excellent Work of the divine Bounty, the *Incarnation*, by which God, as the Author of Grace no leſs than of Nature, communicates Himſelf to Man in ſuch a manner as to become one Perſon with him, makes the *Third* Part. The *Fourth* treats of the Means and Inſtruments by which the Benefit of the *Incarnation* is either conveyed to us, or we guided to it; and theſe

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are the *Sacraments* and the *Divine Laws*. The *Fifth* ſets forth thoſe Qualities by which Men and Angels become holy and divine, and are fitted and prepared for everlaſting Happineſs: theſe are *Grace*, *Faith*, *Hope*, *Charity*, and the other Virtues. The *Sixth* and laſt Part treats of what is deſtructive of, and contrary to theſe Qualities, and this is *Sin*.——I need not enlarge on the propriety and fulneſs of this Diviſion: Reflexion and Uſe will let you into both. It embraces all the Knowledge we can attain concerning God, and the different Relations he bears to his Creatures, and they to him: * *It reaches*, in a comprehenſive manner, *from end to end, and ſweetly diſpoſes all things*: and, to make uſe of an expreſſion, in which a Poet and a Heathen has ſet forth the ſenſe of a Chriſtian and a Divine, it directs us † *to derive every thing from the ſupreme Being, and to refer every thing to him.*

And now, to return again to *Petavius*; I would not be ſuppoſed to recommend him on

* *Wiſdom*, ch. 8.

† Hinc omne Principium, huc refer Exitum. *Hor.*

my

my own judgment alone. The ableſt Critics and moſt learned Men of his own time, and thoſe who have ſince flouriſhed, have concurred in bearing Teſtimony to his ſingular Merit: *Huet*, *Simon*, *Grotius*, *Perault*, *Mabillon*, *Henry de Valois*, the latter of whom wrote his Life, ſpeak of him as the moſt extraordinary Perſonage of his Age; to ſay nothing of thoſe of his own *Society*, who may be ſuſpected of Partiality.

AMONGST a variety of Encomiums beſtowed on him, which I have occaſionally met with, I ſhall content myſelf with ſetting down two: the firſt is from the famous Biſhop of *Avranche*, *Huet*; who ſpeaks thus *. 'That during the ſtay he made at *Paris*, 'he read with a particular Attention the

* Per eos dies, quos in amplificandâ Bibliothecâ meâ conſumebam Lutetiæ, ad veſperum aliquando domum redux, cùm partas opes recognoſcerem, hæſi potiſſimùm in pervolutandis Dogmatibus *Petavii*, recèns editis, quorum magna erat apud doctos homines commendatio. Me etenim, qui & Authorem noſſem, & amarem, & facerem plurimi, cùm materiæ dignitas, tum nitor dictionis, & paſſim diffuſa eruditio totas noctes tenebant attentum & fixum. *Huetius, de rebus ſuis*, page 69.

'Theological Works of *Petavius*, which 'were then juſt publiſhed, and had been re-'ceived with great Approbation by the Learn-'ed: That being acquainted with the Au-'thor, and having a great love and value 'for him, he was ſo taken up with the Dig-'nity of the Subject, the elegance of the 'Stile, and the erudition which appeared 'through the whole Work, that it fixed his 'attention whole days and nights.'——The other commendation of *Petavius* I ſhall take from the account he gives of himſelf to *Mutius Vitelleſchi*, Superior General of the *Society* of *Jeſus*. * 'That he had preſented

* Litterarium tibi munus offero, Theologicorum meorum Dogmatum Tomos tres, à Prælo recentes; in quibus Theologiæ partem illam complexus ſum, quæ de Deo, deque Angelis & Opificio Mundi diſputat. Quam quidem divinarum rerum tractationem, non vetere illâ & Scholarum uſu tritâ viâ, ſum ingreſſus; Sed novâ, &, quod ſine invidiâ dictum ſit, nullius adhuc veſtigiis impreſsâ. Non enim ſubtilem illam, & obſcuris Philoſophiæ tricis involutam Theologiam inſtitui; ſed ingenuam & amœnam, ac de limpidis ac nativis Scripturarum, Conciliorum, Patrumque veterum fontibus liquidiùs profluentem; eandemque non horridam ac propè barbaram, ſed cultu quodam humanitatis hilaratam atque conditam. *Pet.* Lib. 3. Epiſ. 54.

'him

'him with a production of his Studies, 'Three Tomes of Theological Works, juſt 'freſh from the Preſs, wherein he had diſ-'cuſſed that Part of *Divinity* which treats 'of *God*, the *Angels*, and the *Creation* of 'the World. That he had undertook to 'write on theſe divine Matters, not accord-'ing to the old Method, which had long 'prevailed in the Schools, but on a new 'Plan, and which (he hoped he might ſay 'it without Offence) no one had yet attempt-'ed. For he had made choice, not of a 'ſubtil kind of *Theology*, wrapt up in Phi-'loſophical Intricacies, but of one that was 'ingenuous and entertaining, and flowed 'from the limpid and native Sources of the '*Scriptures*, the *Councils*, and the *Fathers*. 'Neither was the Method he had followed, 'forbidding, and almoſt barbarous, but 'lighted up and enlivened with a certain air 'of Elegance and polite Literature.'——A little acquaintance with this Author will let you ſee the right he has to be addreſſed in the Poet's words,

With conſcious Pride, O Man divine!
Aſſume the Honours juſtly thine. *Fra. Hor.*

That he ſtands amongſt the Foremoſt on the Records of ſacred Fame, and will, in all appearance, verify what the above-mentioned fine Genius and celebrated Scholar, *Huet*, has foretold of him, in Terms no leſs deſerved than pompous: * 'All the Schools of Di-'vinity throughout the Chriſtian World re-'ſound with the Name of *Petavius*, liſten 'to, and improve from his Leſſons; and he 'will continue to enlighten the Church to 'the End of Time.'

But his Works, as I have ſaid, taking in only *Three* of the *Six* Parts of the above-mentioned Diviſion, that is, not above half of the Treatiſes which compoſe a compleat Courſe of *Divinity*; this Deficiency muſt be made up from other Writers, and from thoſe, by way of preference, who come neareſt to His Method and Excellence; for, indeed, he ſeems to me to be the Standard of both.

Lessius's Theological Works, will, in great meaſure, ſupply this want. This Author's manner of treating *Divinity* is neither purely

* *Huetiana*, §. 76.

*Poſitive*

*Poſitive* nor *Scholaſtic*, but is tempered with, and partakes of each. His penetration and diſcernment place him on a Level with *Petavius*, though his reading was leſs univerſal. His Stile is leſs eloquent, or, if you pleaſe, has leſs of the Orator, but is of greater uſe in Theological Leſſons. He excels in that perſpicuity and conciſeneſs which is the reſult of extenſive Genius, and having thoroughly underſtood and digeſted the Matter he treats. No language can be more adapted to convey our own Notions to others, and which, on that account, from the *Greek* Idiom, is called *Didactic*.

The Sanctity of his Life ſurpaſſed his Erudition; and there is an air of Piety breathed through all he wrote, and an Unction which makes the moſt ſublime and abſtruſe Subjects affect the Will no leſs than they exerciſe, improve, and raiſe the Underſtanding. When he forces the Reader into emotion and tranſport, as he frequently does, particularly in his Books * *on the divine Perfections*, it is plain he is ſeized with it himſelf. It would

* *De Perfectionibus Moribuſque Divinis.*

be ſuperfluous, as well as endleſs, to point out inſtances of this kind: they occur in every Page, and cannot poſſibly eſcape any one, who underſtands and feels. His Works were ſo accurate before he ſuffered them to appear in Public; ſo finiſhed, as Mr. *Pope* expreſſes himſelf, *with the patient touches of unwearied Art*, that afterwards, when they were republiſhed, * 'He neither changed, 'added, or omitted any thing; and they ap-'peared in the following Editions exactly the 'ſame as in the firſt.'——I ought not to omit, for the honour of this Author, that one of the laſt actions of our renowned Countryman Sir *Walter Raleigh*, was to deſire an intimate Friend to tranſlate into the *Engliſh* tongue and publiſh † two celebrated Treatiſes of *Leſſius*, as a Teſtimony of the Sentiments in which He died. And whoever reads theſe Works, will think the requeſt worthy that learned, and gallant, though unfortunate

* Omnia hæc Opera ita ſolidè ſemper, etiam ipſi Leſſio ſteterunt, ut in eis neč ſententiam, nec apicem mutandum ſentiret. *De vitâ & moribus Leſſii.*

† *De providentiâ Numinis, & Animi immortalitate.*

Com-

Commander.—Surely no two Writers have done more towards recalling School-learning into the uſe and practice of the World, and bringing it into the Company, if I may ſpeak ſo, of the wiſeſt and politeſt Men, than *Petavius* and *Leſſius*.

I SHALL only add one more to theſe great Men, and that is *du Hamel*, who has wrote a Courſe of *Divinity*, both *Speculative* and *Practical*, as he terms it, in a very neat and judicious manner. And though this Author be no ways comparable, unleſs in the purity of his Language, to either of the above-mentioned, yet he has this Advantage over both, to have publiſhed a compleat Body of *Divinity*, and compriſed it in *ſeven* moderate Volumes *.——*Tournely*'s Courſe of *Divinity*, as I am aſſured, is on the ſame Plan, and has all the Advantages of *du Hamel*'s, and contains moreover a diſcuſſion of ſeveral Points which have a nearer relation to the Diſputes of the preſent Times. But it being contrary to my preſent Deſign to recommend to you any Author, with whoſe Works I am

* *Pariſiis, apud Michellet, viâ Jacobæâ*, Anno 1691.

not converſant; I muſt refer you, for this Gentleman's merit, to thoſe who are acquainted with it.

WAS *Divinity* ſtudied on ſuch Plans as the Authors I have ſpoken of have not only laid down, but given us Examples of in their own Writings, no Study would be ſo noble, ſo proper to give the Mind a Chriſtian elevation, or afford ſuch pleaſure, and be of ſuch uſe to the Learner. It would unite, in an eminent degree, all the Advantages of the pureſt *Philoſophy*, both ancient and modern; the Politeneſs of *human Literature*; a great inſight into *Church Antiquity*, and be the beſt Key to the Works of the *Fathers* and the *Scriptures*. The moſt uſeful Treatiſes likewiſe of the *Canon* and *Civil Law* would have their place, as * *Of God*, conſidered as a *Lawgiver*, of *Laws*, of *Law* and *Equity*; which Subjects have been treated in a very maſterly manner by two Divines, *Suarez* and *Leſſius*; the former of whom has no leſs excelled in this Matter, than in thoſe admira-

* *De Deo Legiſlatore. De Legibus. De Jure & Juſtitiâ.*

ble

ble Books * *on Religion*, which have a nearer relation to Theological Studies; and the Work of the other has filled the Closets of the learned in the Law, and all the Courts of Judicature in *Europe* with the Author's reputation.

How pleased would a young Divine be to have such a Field of Knowledge opened to his view; to perceive his Mind enlarged by Objects so suited to satisfy all its Capacities; and to feel the influence and natural tendency of this Study to ground and improve him in all Christian Accomplishments! *Divinity*, treated in this manner, would appear in that noble Simplicity, which is the sovereign Perfection of Art, and very different from that narrow and abject View, which some take of it from the crude Notions and barbarous Language, from the low Sophistry, and endless Wranglings, the useless and superfluous Disquisitions, which have sometimes prevailed in the Schools, and sink *Theo-*

* *De Religione.*

*logy* by clogging it with a load of their own *. Every ingenuous Diſpoſition muſt be ſenſible this could never be the Purpoſe of ſo divine a Science, whatever may have been the Miſapplication, by any of thoſe who profeſs it. It reminds me of that rich and beautiful Weapon which was employed to the Deſtruction of the Perſon who gave it; and of which it was ſaid, with a delicacy which no tranſlation can reach,

Non *hos* quæſitum munus in *uſus*. *Virg.* L. 4.

Whereas, when we conſider *Theology* in its proper Light, it preſents itſelf to us as deſerving our moſt ſerious Application; we diſcover its dignity and uſefulneſs, and the preference it claims before all other Sciences, and how much it conduces to hinder the Soul from debaſing itſelf by any Purſuit unworthy Faculties capable of ſuch Elevation.

Lessius ſeems to have had a thorough conviction of what I have been ſaying, and has

* Interim modus ille commendetur Theologo noſtro, ut quod in cæteris valet, multo magis in divinarum rerum commentatione teneat, *ne quid nimis*. *Petavius*.

very

very happily expreſſed his ſentiments on this Head, in the Dedication of his Theological Works to the Abbot of *Lieſſe:* His Words are theſe *. ‘ Amongſt thoſe things which ‘ we ſhould chiefly have at heart during this ‘ Life, the Knowledge of the Deity has the ‘ firſt place. That he does not mean a ſu- ‘ perficial and barren Knowledge, but ſuch ‘ as is accurate, clear and efficacious, and ‘ extends its Energy to the Affections, and ‘ to every Faculty of the Mind. From this, ‘ ſays he, as from a living Source, proceeds all ‘ Intellectual good, every wholeſome diſpo- ‘ ſition, and that Heavenly-mindedneſs by ‘ which we are raiſed to Perfection and eter- ‘ nal Life; and without it, it is vain to ‘ pretend to any diſtinguiſhed degree of Ho-

* Inter ea quæ homini in hâc vitâ maximè debent eſſe curæ, primum meritò locum tenet cognitio Divinitatis; eaque non perfunctoria, vel aridæ cujuſdam ſpeculationis, ſed accurata, illuſtris & efficax, quæ vim ſuam etiam in affectum & omnes animæ vires diffundat. Ex hâc enim omne bonum animi, omniſque ſalutaris diſpoſitio, quâ ad perfectionem & vitam æternam ſublevamur, tanquam ex uberrimo fonte promanat; & ſine hâc fruſtra ad ſublimem Perfectionis gradum contendas.

'lineſs.' He takes up the ſame Subject again towards the end of the Preface to the ſame Works, and informs the Reader, * 'That 'the Method he had followed was not altogether *Scholaſtic*, but ſomewhat more free 'and liberal; and ſuch as did not only clear 'up the Subject, but place it in an advantageous Light, and would affect the Will 'no leſs than improve the Underſtanding: 'that theſe Matters ſhould be ſet forth ſo as 'to raiſe in the Reader, wonder, awe and 'aſtoniſhment, fear and joy; which Ends 'could never be gained where the great Concern is about minute matters and ſubtleties, 'which ſeem only calculated for Diſputes 'and Cavils.' I muſt deſire you to read both the Dedication and Preface, from which theſe

* Modus tractandi non erit omnino Scholaſticus, ſed nonnihil liberior, ut res illæ non ſolùm utcunque intelligantur, ſed amplo quodam ac ſplendido modo menti Lectoris objiciantur, prout idoneæ ſunt non modò ad Intellectum clarè inſtruendum, verùm etiam ad concitandum in animis affectum Pietatis. Ita enim concipi debent ut mentem admiratione, ſtupore, reverentiâ, timore, gaudio poſſint afficere: quod non fit cùm in minutiis ac ſubtilitatibus quibuſdam ſolùm ad diſputationes comparatis hæretur.

Citations

Citations are taken: they deſerve, indeed, to be tranſcribed from the beginning to the end.

THE Preliminary Diſcourſes likewiſe of *Petavius* to his Theological Works are as elegant and compleat an Inſtruction on this Head, and on the diſpoſitions a Student is to bring to the Study of *Divinity*, as you can read.

BUT by a Method directly contrary to that I have been ſpeaking of, and which the above-mentioned and ſome other judicious Writers have followed, this Study, both with reſpect to the Subject matter and the Manner of treating it, has frequently degenerated into fruitleſs Speculation and Contention. An infinite number of Queſtions have been ſtarted; Objections made to thoſe Queſtions, and Solutions to thoſe Objections, which often do not confute, but diſtinguiſh afreſh, and breed one Queſtion almoſt as faſt they ſolve another. I hope I ſhall give no Offence in borrowing an Alluſion from Lord *Bacon*, who brings the Fiction of *Scylla* as a lively image of this abuſe of Learning. The up-

per

per part of her Body repreſented a comely Virgin; but then——*Candida ſuccinctam latrantibus inguina monſtris.* So the Generalities of the Schoolmen, their Definitions, Diviſions, and Concluſions are, for a while, fair and proportionable; but when they deſcend into a detail of all the Subtleties, which the reſtleſneſs of human Wit can invent in Theological, no leſs than in other Matters, inſtead of a Womb fruitful with uſeful Information, and *that Wiſdom*, the firſt Character of which, according to St. *James*, is to be *modeſt and peaceable* *, they end in Deformity, Altercation and Clamour.

THE complaint which the *Spaniſh* Critic made long ago, concerning the abuſe of the *Mathematics*, is very applicable to this more ſacred and important Study. And though it conveys little more than what I have juſt now obſerved, yet the Inſtruction being of that Moment, and, at the ſame time, ſo much neglected, it cannot be too often inculcated. † 'Uſe, ſays this valuable Au-

'thor,

* Chap. 3d.

† Artes hæ, uſu remoto longiſſimè, ad ea ſunt evectæ, quorum

'thor, is ſet aſide, and the Science ſcrewed 'up to things, in which there is no Advan-'tage, but only a barren kind of Contem-'plation and endleſs Inquiry: for one 'Diſcuſſion begets another without end 'or meaſure. And whereas the Principles 'of this Diſcipline, and a certain regular 'Progreſſion in them, both ſharpen and de-'light the mind: ſo when they are over-'ſtrained and carried beyond their due 'bounds, they become a torture to generous 'Diſpoſitions, and ſuch as are formed for 'public benefit.'

I MUST confeſs, when I reflect on ſeveral Treatiſes of *Divinity*, which I have looked into, and ſeveral Diſputations, at which I have been preſent, I cannot but think the following Obſervation of a thoughtful and

quorum nullus eſſet fructus, ſed tantùm ſterilis quædam contemplatio, & inquiſitio infinita: quoniam alia ex aliis ſine modo ullo naſcuntur. Et ſicut hujuſmodi Diſciplinarum initia, & legitimi quidam progreſſus juvant animos, acuunt, oblectant; ſic magna & aſſidua exercitia carnificinæ ſunt generoſarum mentium & publico bono conditarum. *Lud. Vives*, L. 5. *de cauſis corruptarum Artium.*

judicious

judicious Pagan might frequently be of great uſe both to *Chriſtians* and *Divines*. * 'Ariſ-
'totle, ſays this Author, has excellently well
'obſerved, that we ſhould never be ſo modeſt
'and reſerved as when any thing relating to
'the Deity is in Queſtion. For if we enter
'the Temples with compoſure, and ap-
'proach to offer Sacrifice with our Eyes caſt
'down, our Dreſs decent, and every other
'indication of Reſpect and Awe; with how
'much more cauſe ought we to obſerve all
'this, when we reaſon on the divine Na-
'ture, leſt through Raſhneſs or Irreverence,
'we either aſſert what we know not, or ſpeak
'againſt the Truth we know?'

FROM a habit of receiving into our Minds the moſt excellent things without the Reſpect and Reverence here recommended, ſuch an

* Egregiè *Ariſtoteles* ait, nunquam nos verecundiores eſſe debere, quàm cùm de Diis agitur. Si intramus Templa compoſiti, ſi ad Sacrificium acceſſuri vultum ſubmittimus, togam adducimus, ſi in omne argumentum modeſtiæ fingimur; quanto hoc magis facere debemus cùm de Deorum naturâ diſputamus, ne quid temerè, ne quid impudenter aut ignorantes affirmemus, aut ſcientes mentiamur? *Seneca*.

inſen-

inſenſibility almoſt always enſues, that any better information can with difficulty make an impreſſion on a Breaſt already hardened: And Spiritual Medicine ceaſes to operate on the Mind from the ſame Principle as Phyſic taken wantonly, and without obſerving proper Preſcriptions, has no effect, or a very bad one, on the Body *. Thus we often ſee Perſons, who have been long inured to the Din of the Schools, as deaf to divine Subjects, as the Inhabitants about ſome parts of the *Nile* are ſaid to be to all ſofter ſounds than the Fall of the *Cataracts*.——The reaſon is obvious: the Leſſons are often given in ſuch a manner as rather depreciates than re-

* Quid quòd, ex illâ conſuetudine recipiendi in animos res præſtantiſſimas ſine ullâ dignatione, ducitur callus, ne ulla deinceps ad virtutem exhortatio poſſit in pectus obduratum penetrare: nec aliter non prodeſt animis hæc medicina animorum, quàm nec corpora poteſt juvare pharmacum aut potio, cui, citra neceſſitatem, per luſum aſſuevimus. *L. Vives.*

Ideo Juvenes, inter morales illas altercationes, & tot ſtrepitus de omni genere virtutum ac bonorum morum, nihil probitatis trahunt: quòd ſcilicet illa omnia ſic dicuntur, ut nec commendari virtutis excellentia poſſit animis, nec vitiorum fœditas eſſe odio. Idem.

commends

commends the Subject, however ſacred; and thus, inſtead of creating a hatred to oppoſite Errors and Vices, it breeds an unbecoming and hurtful Familiarity with matters, which if conſidered in an advantageous light, would inſpire more ſuitable Sentiments.

THERE yet remain two *Appendixes* of *Theological Studies*, which, though included in the Heads already treated, yet on account of their Importance deſerve a particular Conſideration; Theſe are *Caſuiſtry* and *Controverſy*.—*Buſenbaum*, as his Work ſtands now corrected, has given a very ſuccinct and judicious Abridgment of *Caſes of Conſcience*, or *Moral Divinity*, which has been enlarged on by *La Croix*.——The *Summary* of Cardinal *Tolet* is much eſteemed; And *Layman* brought to the elaborate Work he has publiſhed on theſe Matters, all the ſuccours of *Theology*, and a profound Knowledge of the *Canon* and *Civil Law*.——If theſe, or any other Authors of the ſame Body, have ſometimes fallen into Errors, the Body *(that Wiſdom might be juſtified by her own Sons *)* has corrected the Miſ-

* *Matthew*, c. 11. *v.* 19.

takes

takes of its Members, as ſoon as they were ſhown to have gone aſtray, and never maintained Opinions after they were condemned or cenſured by proper Authority.——The Clamour againſt the *Moral Divines* of the *Society*, which was raiſed by the *Provincial Letters*, and ſuch like Libels, had the ſame Riſe with a late idle Tale of a *Jeſuit-King* of *Paraguay:* the former repreſented that Body as Corrupters of Chriſtian Morality; the latter, as Rebels and Uſurpers. Both opinions have been propagated, both believed, on Motives beſt known to the Authors. For Calumny ſpread, no matter how, will frequently prove an Over-match for Candour and Truth, till Time has applied his Touch-ſtone, and proved the Temper of the Metal.

After this brief mention of *Moral Divinity*, I cannot but deſire you to read an * *Introduction to the Canon Law*, by *Fleury*, as containing a valuable branch of it. Indeed, it would not fall in with the Subject of this Diſcourſe, but as it is grounded on Chriſtian Morality: And accordingly the Author has

* *Inſtitution au Droit Eccleſiaſtique.*

conſidered it, not as a Profeſſion, by which a Name is to be acquired, or a Fortune raiſed; but as the Knowledge of thoſe Rules we are firſt to practiſe our ſelves, and then bring others to obſerve, either by Counſel or Deciſion. For the *Canons* are not human Inventions, but the chief and ſum of thoſe Maxims and Obſervances, which the *Apoſtles*, inſpired by the *H. Ghoſt*, and their Succeſſors, guided by the ſame *Spirit*, have eſtabliſhed at ſeveral Times, and on different Exigencies, from the beginning of the Church, in order to maintain or reinſtate the Purity of the *Goſpel* Diſcipline.

As for *Controverſy*, beſides the aid that Science receives from the other Parts of *Theology*, and the copious and excellent Works of the Great *Bellarmine*, you will find amongſt the Writers of your own Country ſeveral who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves this way, and adapted their Writings to the particular Circumſtances of the times in which they lived.——Mr. *Robert Manning* muſt be mentioned with ſingular Praiſe on this Occaſion; and another Author ſtill living, whoſe modeſty,

deſty, piety and Learning are ſo univerſally acknowledged, that *Doctor* * * * is the only Perſon who will not know it is Himſelf.—— *Boſſuet's Expoſition of the Catholic Doctrine*, undeceives the Reader of the abſurd and falſe Tenets which ignorance, prejudice and malice, have charged on the *Church* of *Rome*, and juſtifies her Doctrine by ſetting it in its true Light. And as this incomparable Writer's ſkill in Controverſy was, what I hope your's will be, the Reſult of comprehenſive and uniform Knowledge of the *Scriptures* and *Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity*, rather than a Knack of quoting Texts and Paſſages, his Method is liberal, perſuaſive, and Solid.——*The Rule of Faith*, clears up that Cardinal Point concerning the Judge of Religious Controverſies, in a manner ſuperior to any thing I have met with elſewhere.—The diſtinguiſhed Talents of *F. R. Parſons* are too well known and admired to need any mention; and his ſtrength appears no where greater than againſt Dr. *Barlow*, and the Attorney General Sir *Edward Coke*.

In the Management of *Controverſy* I have two things to recommend to you: the firſt, never to depart from that temper and mildneſs, with which the Spirit of Chriſtianity always inſpires its genuine Defenders: And makes them obſerve the Method of Phyſicians, who apply unpleaſant Remedies, not to exaſperate the Patient, but to heal the Diſeaſe. Secondly, to confine this Science to ſuch matters only as are of its Diſtrict.—— When thoſe who diſſent from us are not enlightned by the ſame Truth, with which we are privileged, their Misfortune calls for our Tenderneſs, and is ever to be treated with that Charity, which is *gentle and compaſſionate* *, and *by Lips, which have made a League with Humanity* †. And if ever you enter this Religious Liſt with any of your own Country, Remember good Senſe, good Nature, and a diſpoſition to Virtue, are the Characteriſtic of the *Engliſh*.——The other Caution to be obſerved in *Controverſy* is, not to confound *Civil* Sanctions and things of mere *Temporal* concern with *Religious* Tenets and Matters of a *ſpiritual* and higher, in-

* 1 *Cor.* ch. 13. † *Prov.* ch. 31.

deed,

deed, but ſtill very different Order.——As to the Nature and Extent of *Civil* and *Religious* Rights, the *Goſpel* ſeems to have regulated their Claims and fixt their Boundaries by commanding its Followers * *To give to* Cæſar *the things which are* Cæſar's, *and to God thoſe that are God's:* and by thoſe accurate Precepts St. *Paul* has given on this Head, and the Reaſons he aſſigns for them †. And the primitive Chriſtians, whoſe Circumſtances were as difficult as all the adverſe Powers of Earth united could make them, have left in their own Conduct, for above three hundred years, a full and plain Commentary on theſe and the like Texts ‡. Excluded by the Laws of the State from any ſhare in public Affairs, they lived quietly under thoſe, to whom Providence had either entruſted or permitted them; without alledging the Truth of their own Religious Tenets, or the Errors of their

* *Matthew*, ch. 22.

† *Romans*, ch. 13.

‡ Vita Chriſti & Sanctorum Apoſtolorum & Martyrum veriſſimus Commentarius eſt verborum Magiſtri omnium Magiſtrorum. *Bellarminus, de verbis Domini in cruce prolatis.*

Rulers, as a Plea for Exemption from ſuch ſubmiſſion. Deprived of the free Exerciſe of their Religion, and of the common Advantages of Society, they only reſented the Hardſhips they lay under by a Conduct which ſhowed they deſerved milder Treatment. Being inſtructed by their great Maſter that * *His Kingdom was of another World*, they engaged in no Faction or popular Commotion about the Concerns of *This*: And in their *Apologies* to the Magiſtrates of their reſpective States, they defied their moſt avowed Enemies to charge them with any breach of the public Tranquillity, or violation of the eſtabliſhed Polity of their Country. A Libel on the Adminiſtration would have appeared to them a criminal Infraction of the Reſpect due to the Sovereign, which is one of the ſtrongeſt bands of the Common-wealth, and for which the tendereſt proviſion has been made by all Laws human and divine. They were as inoffenſive and peaceable under a *Diocletian* as a *Conſtantine*. They conſidered the Times in which they lived, and acquieſced in that Order which had

* *John*, ch. 18. *v.* 36.

appointed

appointed them to live in them *. Let me moreover, obſerve, that the Lenity of a Government gives it a particular right to the like Behaviour from all thoſe who live under it; and more eſpecially from Perſons of equitable and ingenuous Diſpoſitions.

And now having gone through the ſeveral Diviſions of ſacred Learning, and the Authors I would recommend to you on each of them, I ſhall lengthen out the Catalogue by adding a few, whoſe Works have a great connexion not with *Divinity* only, but with Letters in general.——I think you cannot begin your Studies with a juſter notion of the End, Meaſure, and Extent of them than may be gathered from *Mabillon*'s *Treatiſe of Monaſtic Studies*. I do not know ſo uſeful a Work, and where ſo much Reading is joined to ſuch elegance and eaſe. It is in two Parts, the firſt of which is Hiſtorical, and contains the ſtate of Literature amongſt the Monks, from the earlieſt Times of their Inſtitution to our Days. The ſecond contains general

* Meminiſſe Temporum, quibus nati ſumus. *Tacitus*, L. 4. Hiſt.

Inſtructions concerning the Studies of Religious Men. It was deſigned as a Juſtification of the Studies of the *Benedictines*, and may be juſtly ranked amongſt thoſe Works, by which the great and excellent Author, and his Brethren *Dacheri*, *Ruinart* and *Menard* have proved in their own Perſons, that Science is one of the greateſt helps to religious Perfection, when undertaken with their Views, and carried on by their Example.——There are likewiſe ſeveral Obſervations and Precepts in * the *Method of Studies of the Society of Jeſus*, which you cannot fail of approving, as being the Reſult of great experience and judgment, as well as of † *that Knowledge, which*, according to St. *Paul*, *is agreeable to Godlineſs*. ‡ Monſieur *Simon*, in his *Critical Library*, ſpeaks very advantageouſly of this little Book.——Lord *Bacon*'s *Advancement of Learning human and divine*, is a Reach of Genius beyond any thing perhaps, that our own or any other Country can boaſt of: He there opens ſo extenſive and fruitful a Field of Knowledge, and gives ſuch Directions for cultivating it, as the Learned themſelves were

* *Ratio Studiorum, S. J.* † 1 *Tim.* ch. 6. ‡ *Tome* I. c. 4.

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unacquainted with; till the Perſon, whom Mr. *Pope* calls *the Greateſt and Wiſeſt of Mankind*, made the Diſcovery and brought it to Light.——*Lewis Vivés* has wrote * *of the cauſes of decay in Sciences*, and *of the method of teaching them*, with ſuch judgment, learning, and elegance, as to be eſteemed the beſt Critic the *Spaniards* have had ſince *Quinctilian*. His Works are not only profitable in point of all profane and ſacred Erudition, but likewiſe with reſpect to Religion, in juſtice to which he lays down this Principle at ſetting out, † *That Piety is to be the Rule of all other Sciences.*——*The Theological Common-Places* ‡ of *Melchior Canus* are little inferior in method and elegance of Style to thoſe Books in which *Tully* draws the Character of an accompliſhed Orator.

And ſince not only general but particular Subjects have been illuſtrated by this Method,

* *De cauſis corruptarum Artium, & de Diſciplinis tradendis.*

† Oportet Pietatem eſſe reliquarum Inſtitutionum Canonem.

‡ *De Locis Theologicis.*

it

it will likewiſe be worth your while to be converſant with ſome of theſe. To give one Sample of Excellence in this kind; The Preface of *Petavius* to his Books on the *Trinity*, which, as *Boſſuet* has with great judgment obſerved, clears up and illuſtrates his whole Syſtem; is extremely fine, and worthy a peculiar diſtinction even amongſt that Author's Works.

* It is not eaſily to be imagined how much ſuch Plans as theſe, and that extenſive and univerſal Light in which they place Knowledge, contribute to enlarge the Mind, and give juſt notions of Tenets, Facts, and Authors; at the ſame time that they ſhow the Relation one Science has to another, and by what Coalition the ſeveral Parts of the Whole of Knowledge are formed: Which are the great Ends of Study, and the ripeſt fruits of Proficiency. † For it is a Truth which

* Quid eſt ergo quod vehementiùs homines in errorem inducat & fraudem, quàm inferioribus niti rationibus, ſuperiores autem illas & primas non tenere? *Sadoletus.*

† Illud dicere ſatis habeo, nihil eſſe in omni vitâ prius Conſilio;

which cannot be too much inſiſted on, that nothing is more eſtimable than Juſtneſs of Mind and Diſcernment: All other Qualities have limited Uſes; but Exactneſs in Judging is of general Uſe in every Branch of Science, in every Employment of Life. Thoſe Books, therefore, which moſt conduce to form our Underſtanding, and render it as correct as may be, ought to have that ſhare in our Application they ſo juſtly deſerve; ſince all our Studies either have, or ſhould have no other View.——The Generality of Men reaſon only within a certain narrow Circle, from Principles impreſſed either by the Authority of others, or their own Prejudices. But the knowing Man, the true *Philoſopher*, and much more, the true *Divine* goes further, and begins higher. He does not ſtop either at the Opinions of other People, or at Notions, which are received before they are examined; he goes up till he has found ſuch

Conſilio; fruſtraque ſine eo tradi cæteras artes; pluſque vel ſine Doctrinâ Prudentiam, quàm ſine Prudentia facere Doctrinam. *Quinctil.*

Sapientiam adjunge, Cui præparare ingenia noſtra litteræ debent, non detinere ea, aut ſibi vindicare. *Lipſius.*

fixt Principles and a Truth ſo clear that it cannot be queſtioned; and that being diſcovered, he draws his conſequences and never departs from them. A Scholar of this Stamp is not only inſtructed to be clear and uniform in what he knows, but likewiſe to be ſteady in his Conduct, unſhaken in his Reſolutions, though patient in the execution of them, even in his Temper, and conſtant in Virtue. This Method of Studying is, indeed, diveſted of that Noiſe and Show, in which the vanity and pride of Men dreſs up *Learning*; but it opens the way to real *Knowledge*; it hits the *Mark*, and at length, gains *the Prize**.

In what has been hitherto ſaid, I have chiefly had an Eye to that Advancement, which either wholly or in great part depends on our ſelves. But there is, as I have already obſerved, another great Help to proficiency, which we muſt owe to others; I mean the Ability of the *Profeſſor*.——I wiſh

* At nos plerique hodie ut omnium rerum, ſic litterarum quoque intemperantiâ laboramus; nec Vitæ ſed Scholæ diſcimus. *Seneca.*

you

you one, whoſe Judgment is ſolid and Notions clear; who has ſufficient Diſcernment in the Choice of his Matter, and Language to recommend it ſo diſpoſed. The unpoliſhed and even barbarous Stile in which this ſacred Science has been ſometimes delivered, can ſurely have no Advantage over Perſpicuity and Purity of Expreſſion; and if it has been employed in Theological Matters, in Times which were not acquainted with any thing better, this can be no more an Argument for our continuing the uſe of it, than to pretend we ſhould ſtill build on like our *Gothic* Anceſtors, in defiance to all that Harmony of Proportion and thoſe Graces of Architecture, of which *Palladio* and *Jones* have revived the Rules, and ſet the Example to a happier and politer Age.

'I WOULD have all ſacred Matters, ſays 'an Author, whoſe Works are at once the 'precept and the pattern too, be treated in 'ſuch a manner as becomes Perſons of a li-'beral and ingenuous way of thinking: for 'I can by no means approve of thoſe who 'write on ſuch Subjects with careleſneſs and

'inac-

'inaccuracy. Their Works carry with them 'no Character of genuine Piety, and are 'very unfit to inflame the Mind with the 'Love of God *.——I was moreover 'moved by this Conſideration, ſays the po-'lite *Muretus*, that *Plato* had very rightly 'obſerved, there ought to be a certain agree-'ment between the Stile and the Subject: 'from whence it was eaſy to infer, that in 'order to treat divine Matters in a manner 'ſuited to their Dignity, the Language ought 'to have an affinity with them †.'——The accuracy of the *Claſſic* Authors may, in this reſpect, be a leſſon to Profeſſors of *Divinity*.

* Volo ut omnia Latinè, atque ut inter ingenuè eruditos maximè decet, dicantur. Nam hos, qui genere dicendi inaccurato & incondito res Theologicas ſcribere aggrediuntur, ego ſanè non probo. Nullum enim ineſt in eis ſcriptis veræ pietatis ſpecimen, non ad inflammandos in amorem Dei animos ulla appoſita ratio. *Sadoletus, in Epiſ. ad Rom.*

† Illud etiam me commovebat, quod præclarè à Platone ſcriptum noveram, orationi & iis rebus quæ oratione tractantur, quandam inter ſe cognationem intercedere oportere. Ex quo facilè intelligebam conſequi, ut ad res divinas pro dignitate tractandas, divinum quoddam requireretur orationis genus.

Not

Not only the main purpoſe of their Writings, but every Incident, however foreign to the Studies they make Profeſſion of, is touched with as great care and propriety, as if that alone had been the Object of their Application *.— I think the *Fathers* of the Church have made it paſt a doubt that all the *Speculative* and *Practical* Parts of the *Chriſtian Doctrine*, that is, of the whole ſubſtance of *Theology*, may be ſo treated as to receive a new luſtre from the ability of the Writer. The *Divines* I have mentioned through this Diſcourſe, and ſeveral others, have confirmed the ſame Truth, which has likewiſe been greatly illuſtrated by the Works of the learned Cardinals *Contareni*, *Pole*, and the other Ornament of the ſacred College above cited. Nay, *Vida* has ſhown that ſuch an Attempt may not be, in ſome degree, unſuccesful in Proſe only.

The Order of my Subject has at length brought me to a Diſcuſſion, which I men-

* Quocirca priſci homines, qui Orbes illos Diſciplinarum confecerunt, videas quidquid libris ſuis admiſcent, adeo eſſe purum atque exactum, ut unum illud ſtuduiſſe atque egiſſe ſemper dicas in vita. *Lud. Vivés.*

tioned

tioned above, concerning the moſt proper Method of giving Theological Lectures, ſo as to bring *Divinity*, as near as poſſible, to that Standard of Excellence, which has been propoſed throughout this Diſcourſe, and, namely, in the foregoing Paragraph. I ſhall therefore enter on it accordingly.

It were to be wiſhed, for the Advantage both of the Students and Profeſſors, that the Divinity Lectures which *Maldonatus* gave at *Paris*, had been made public. I will only mention the ſublime and difficult Treatiſe of the *Trinity*, in which he ſeems to have gone beyond his uſual erudition and judgment, as great as they are acknowledged to be in his other Works. He has joined brevity with perſpicuity, and ſays much in few words, which is a rare quality amongſt *School Divines*. He divides this important Subject into *ſix* Chapters only, which make up no more than *ten* Sheets of paper; and are a proof that a compleat Courſe of *Divinity* might be given in Two years, which a *Sorbon* Profeſſor can ſcarcely drag his Scholars through in Ten. He diſpoſes theſe *Six* Chapters under

der particular Heads: In the *Firſt*, to remove all Ambiguity, he gives an Explication of the Terms made uſe of in treating this Myſtery. In the *Second*, he expounds the Myſtery itſelf, but without entering on any Queſtion concerning it. The *Third* treats of the Method, by which the *Trinity* either has, or may be known by us. The *Fourth* aſſerts the Unity of the Divine Being in Three Perſons, againſt the Hereticks who divided it. The *Fifth* proves the Diſtinction of the Divine Perſons, againſt thoſe who confounded them; and the *Sixth* treats of the Proprieties of each of the Three Perſons in particular. His manner of citing is very brief: he gives the Subſtance of the Authorities he makes uſe of, and refers the Reader to the Works, from whence they are taken. This Method does not hinder his Lectures from throwing a ſufficient light on the chief and more important Subdiviſions, and affording every neceſſary aſſiſtance towards a further and more particular Information: at the ſame time, it neither ſurfeits nor wearies the Learner, and allows him freedom of thought, and leiſure for reading and reflexion. In commending this

compendious Method, I would not be ſuſpected to think *Four* Years too long a term for the Study of *Divinity:* But I look upon all time and labour, without a proper Direction, in whatever Science, to be in a *Maze* rather than a *Way*; and ſuch as may *carry* the Student *about* the Mart of Knowledge, but ſeldom and late *lead* him *to* it.—— And as ſuch Direction with reſpect to the public Lectures of *Divinity* muſt neceſſarily be of ſingular ſervice, I hope I ſhall not be cenſured for aſſuming too much, if I give my opinion concerning them.——I muſt begin by owning very ingenuouſly, that I cannot approve of the Compoſition of thoſe Lectures, which are generally given in the Schools; nor of the Length to which they are uſually extended. Can we reaſonably ſuppoſe that a young Profeſſor can produce any thing of his own, comparable to the elaborate Performances of ſo many great Perſonages, who have joined diſtinguiſhed Abilities and Induſtry to Age and Experience? There are no new *Diſcoveries* to be made in *Theology*; and, if there were, I preſume they would not be brought to light by ſuch raw

*Adven-*

*Adventurers.* And if any one will give himſelf the trouble to look into the Compoſitions of twenty modern Profeſſors, he will find the *Lectures*, indeed, greatly *multiplied*, but the *Science* itſelf little *forwarded:* that they have proceeded, as the *Proverb* ſays, *in aliud*, not, *in melius*, and have given other *Words*, not other *Matter*. But, not to ſpeak of the Subject of theſe Lectures; the manner of delivering them has been *Circular* rather than *Progreſſive*, and ſo far from *extending* the Boundaries of this Science, that it has not *cultivated* that Portion, of which it found her in Poſſeſſion——In order to remove this Check on Improvement, and thus, at the ſame time to ſpare both the Profeſſor and the Student that time and labour, which might be reſerved to better Purpoſes; there ought, I think, to be in each Univerſity and Religious Order, a printed Courſe of *Divinity Lectures*, compiled from the moſt approved Authors, in a judicious, clear, and compendious manner; and thus compiled, made the Standard and Claſſic Author of each reſpective School. Some important Queſtions, in which whole Schools differ,

might be treated Problematically, and the Arguments on each ſide ſtated fairly (if ſuch a thing can be) in ſeparate Articles. *Confutation*, which is apt to take much time, ſhould be treated ſparingly, and only employed againſt errors and prejudices of Moment; and not furniſh freſh matter for *Objections:* For if it be too cloſely followed, it is as prejudicial to Knowledge, as it would be to an Army to omit the great purpoſe of the Campaign, and ſet down before every little Fort and Hold. Whereas if the Field be kept, and the main Enterprize purſued, other things come in of themſelves.——This Courſe of Lectures ſhould be ſo printed as to have all the Treatiſes detached from each other; and given ſeparately to the Students as they advance in their Studies.——But as the ſkill of the Profeſſor helps greatly to the progreſs of the Scholar; and nothing realizes our Attainments, if I may ſo ſpeak, and renders us more Maſters of a Subject, than to make a judicious Extract of a Work, in which it is treated with accuracy; The Profeſſor ſhould abridge the chief Heads of theſe Lectures, and then deliver and explain them. The



ſmaller

ſmaller the *Quantity* was of ſuch an Extract, the ſtronger would be the *Spirit*; and *half an hour's* writing a day would be ſufficient to give the Student the *Heads* ſo digeſted; and *all* the aſſiſtance of *this kind* he could receive from his Profeſſor's induſtry.—The Oeconomy of this Method, both with regard to time and labour, appears to me extremely advantageous, and well deſerving the attention of thoſe who have the government and direction of the higher Studies. The Scholars particularly, for whoſe benefit public Inſtitutions ſhould be chiefly calculated, would find their account in the leiſure and opportunity it affords for Reflexion, and deriving their Knowledge from the pureſt and deepeſt Sources: Their Health, likewiſe, and Diſpoſition to learn would be conſulted: the former of which is frequently much impaired, and the latter quite worn out by ſo much writing.

Let a Profeſſor make a Trial of the Method here propoſed, in the * *Divinity Lec-*

* Prælectiones Theologicæ L. Leſſii. Opus Poſthumum, Lovanii, Anno, 1645.

*tures* of *Leſſius*, or any other Author of the firſt note, and I am much deceived if he does not find *Eaſe* and *Advancement* both to himſelf and thoſe, whoſe care he has undertaken, to be the *Reſult* of it.

But beſides this part of a *Divine*'s Inſtitution, there is another which deſerves no leſs conſideration; and that is *Diſputation*. This Exerciſe was originally introduced amongſt Youth, that the neceſſity of giving an account in Public of what they had learnt, either as Opponents or Defendants, might oblige them to uncommon diligence; awaken the latent vigour of their Minds, and keep up an Alacrity, through a deſire of Superiority, or ſhame of being overcome. And Perſons, more advanced, conferred together; that having conſidered the Object of Inquiry on all Sides, they might, at length, perceive its real point of View, and true Light. *The derivation of the name in the *Latin* tongue ſhews this to have been the Origin of *Diſputation*; and that it was only intended to clear

* Dicuntur Diſputationes, quòd per eas Veritas ceu putaretur ac purgaretur.

up

up Truth, and remove whatever is an obſtacle to the diſcovery of it. 'Nor can it be 'doubted but ſuch Conferences would, like a 'gentle friction, as an ancient Writer has ob-'ſerved, brighten up and poliſh that Truth, 'which is worn away by altercation and con-'teſt *.' The Definition therefore of Diſputation is, a cool and deliberate Search after Truth, amongſt Perſons as ready to hear the reaſons of others, as to communicate their own: And thoſe who are ſo determined in favour of their own Sentiments, as only to give ear to the contrary in order to oppoſe them, cannot ſeek information by ſuch Diſcuſſions. The mere Diſputant is reſolved before he begins; the Reaſoner, when he leaves off: and in this the uſe and abuſe of Argumentation is chiefly viſible.——But where the Attack and Defence are carried on without any regard to moderation and decency, and the Strife ends in Animoſity and Noiſe, are we not obliged, with ſorrow and ſurpriſe, to put the ſame Queſtion to Theo-

* Moderatâ quadam Studiorum collatione eniteſcit Veritas, tanquam attritu: nimiùm autem altercando amittitur. *Pub. Mimog.*

logy, which *Vivés* does to Philoſophy? * *Is this the Exerciſe of Wiſdom? this the School of ſo venerable a Diſcipline?* The Anſwer, indeed, is ready; that ſo groſs a Miſtake would be no leſs injurious to true Science, than to prefer the ribaldry of a *Therſites* to the debates of a *Meſſala*, or a *Cheſterfield*.——But beſides a proper regulation of the method of Diſputation, the time employed in it ſhould not exceed that due proportion, which this holds with the other Academical Exerciſes, the chief of which, unqueſtionably, are reading and thinking. For where there is not what *Cicero* terms *Sylva and Supellex*, ſufficient and fit Matter to work on, the Artiſt might as well be employed about meaſuring Sounds or weighing the Wind; and the Reſult of all theſe Trials of Skill will be a diſplaying of Defects, inſtead of exerting Abilities.—There is likewiſe a further conſideration which ſhould over-rule and direct whatever can be ſaid on this Head; which is, that all theſe Rehearſals of Learning, if they may be ſo called, ought to be adapted to future

* Eſtne hæc Exercitatio Sapientiæ? Eſt hæc Profeſſio venerandæ Diſciplinæ?

and

and real Uſe: and when this is otherwiſe, the faculties and workings of the Mind are not prepared, but perverted *. Care therefore ſhould be taken both in the choice and management of the Argument, that all the Ends of this Exerciſe be anſwered. And the account which your judicious *Founder* made of it, is ſufficient to recommend it to the Profeſſors and Students of his *Society* †.——By the help of theſe Cautions, the Spirit of Party, which has found a way into thoſe Schools, which ought to have baniſhed it from all other Places, would be greatly abated; and Difficulties and Diſputes ceaſe, in which true *Theology* is no more concerned, than the *Sun* in the Wranglings of Philoſophers, who diſpute about Effects which it does *not* produce.

‡I HOPE you will not think this Syſtem of Studies

* Hæc Adoleſcentes ſibi ſcripta ſciant, ne aliter quàm dicturi ſint, exerceri velint, & in deſueſcendis morentur. *Quintil.*

† *See his Life, by* Bohours, *B.* 5. *page* 547.

‡ Quid enim? tam varia? tam multa? inquies. Nihil eſt; imo incredibile quàm citò hæc ſuſcipiantur & fiant; ſi tenor

Studies comprehends too much. I might ſay a great deal to ſhow the Proficiency I expect from you, is eaſy and gradual, provided you purſue it with conſtancy and order: that the Method I have propoſed, is rather ſedate and ſlow than haſty; and that every thing ſucceeds to thoſe who perſevere. What your preſent Situation will allow you only leiſure to begin and advance in, may be fully attained hereafter. I had a farther View in this Eſſay, than that its uſe ſhould end with your ſtay at the Univerſity. As your Knowledge increaſes, and is better eſtabliſhed, you will in proportion be fitted for higher Attainments: for though there ought to be an uninterrupted *Progreſs* in Literature, yet there ſhould be no *Anticipation*; and the Plan here laid down will firſt ſecure you a ſolid *Foundation*, by giving you a juſt notion of Theological Studies, and then enable you to raiſe a ſuitable *Superſtructure*. To excel in any Branch of Learning, and eſpecially in that Profeſſion which takes in ſo many, requires great Application beſides Capacity; and as

tenor & conſtantia ſit, & quiſque dies opus ſuum probet. *J. Lipſius, Epiſ. ad Hacquevillium.*

in the latter reſpect, Talents have been plentifully entruſted to you, you ſhould do your part, and ſecond the liberal hand of Providence with reſpect to the former. To finiſh your Studies with a moderate Stock of Learning would but ill ſuit your Spirit and Parts: you muſt aſpire to ſomething more worthy the importance of the Concern, more worthy your ſelf. Let Information and Knowledge, which at beſt, are in ſo many others, but the late and backward Fruit of the Remains of Life, be in You, the early Acquiſition of undiſſipated Youth. In making you this Compliment, I only continue my Subject, and indulge myſelf in the proſpect of ſeeing you, one Day, a Pattern of thoſe Inſtructions, which friendſhip and partiality make you now think me qualified to give.

As to the number of Authors, and variety of Matter, I might, moreover, juſtify myſelf by the Authority of *Sadoletus*, one of the beſt Judges the Golden Age of *Leo* the Xth produced, who ſpeaks in the following manner in his Book *on Right Education*; 'That 'at the Age at which his Nephew was, and

'even

'even afterwards, it was both uſeful and or-
'namental to be converſant with the Cha-
'racters and Writings of different Authors,
'becauſe many things, of which daily expe-
'rience juſtifies the uſe, were thus learnt;
'and becauſe various and extenſive reading
'ſharpens the Diſcernment, and makes the
'Judgment more ſteady. That otherwiſe
'our comparing Faculties would lie idle;
'and though in the choice of things we
'gave the Preference to what deſerved it, yet
'this would ſeem the Effect of Chance ra-
'ther than Judgment: And as he deſired the
'Youth, whoſe Mind he was forming,
'ſhould be judicious, preferably to any other
'Commendation, this could never be com-
'paſſed without comparing ſeveral things to-
'gether. That a habit of deciding on the
'ſide of Merit could only be acquired by
'Experience, and particularly by that which
'was derived from various and uſeful read-
'ing: the Fruit whereof would be no leſs
'advantageous than pleaſant *.'

I HAVE,

* Eſt enim huic ætati, in quâ tu es, & verò etiam conſequenti, magno ornamento ſimul & emolumento videre multorum

I HAVE, however, this reſtriction to add to what the learned Cardinal has here laid down, that it ſignifies much leſs how many, than what Works we read; and that this is applicable not only to the Books, but to the Knowledge they convey: What it is, concerns us much more, than how various and extenſive; and *Virgil*'s advice * *Commend a large Farm, but Cultivate a ſmall one*, will, if rightly applied, hold good in Literature,

multorum ingenia atque ſcripta, quòd & multa addiſcuntur à multis, quæ ad uſum & manum quotidie opportuna accidere poſſunt; & Lectio varia atque multiplex judicandi vim prudentiamque confirmat, quæ ſi in uno tantùm genere verſetur, nec habeat quocum id comparet, non delectu ullo ad id ſe applicaviſſe, etiam ſi ſit optimum, ſed caſu & fortunâ in illud ſolum ineidiſſe videatur. At nos delectu volumus & judicio valere vel maximè ejus Adoleſcentis naturam, de quo jamdudum inſiſtimus loqui - - - Quod quidem ſine comparatione plurium fieri non poteſt: quam nobis probandi & adſciſcendi facultatem uſus rerum multarum, imprimiſque lectio erudita & varia adfert - - - Nec ſolùm egregia utilitas, ſed maxima quoque delectatio ex lectione variâ percipietur. *Sadol. de rectâ inſtitutione.*

* . . . Laudato ingentia Rura,
Exiguum colito.

as well as in Huſbandry. * Crowding our Memory is no more improving our Underſtanding, than loading our Stomachs is increaſing our Stock of Health; and we might as well make an Eſtimate of the goodneſs of a Man's Conſtitution by the Bulk and Circumference of his Body, as of his Learning from the uſeleſs load with which his Mind is burthened. This manner of knowing by the Memory only, does not ſo much as deſerve the name of Knowledge: for to know, is to underſtand a Subject, and form a true Judgment of it. Now this is very different from having our Memory ſtrung, if I may uſe the Expreſſion, with an infinite number of Names, Epochs, Quotations, and even memorable Events and Actions. Mr. *Locke* has obſerved, 'that nothing almoſt has done 'more harm to Men dedicated to Letters than 'giving the name of Study to Reading, and 'making a Man of great Reading to be the 'ſame thing with a Man of great Know-

* Idcirco ſtudioſi, qui, nihil intermittendo, multa legunt, multa audiunt, multa ſcribunt & colligunt, Judicio ferè ſeipſos privant, præcipuo bonorum omnium in hâc vitâ. *Vivés.*

'ledge.'

'ledge.' A want of Attention to this Reſtriction on *Sadoletus*'s Advice cauſes Students to wander from one Subject to another, till it fares with them, as *Seneca* ſays of thoſe who ſpend their Lives in travelling, * 'Who 'are received as Gueſts every where, but 'have no where the welcome of Friends.'

'It may be juſtly doubted, ſays Sir *William Temple*, whether the weight and num-'ber of ſo many other Mens Thoughts and 'Notions, may not ſuppreſs our own, or 'hinder the Motion and Agitation of them, 'from which all Invention ariſes; as heap-'ing on Wood, or too many Sticks, or too 'cloſe together, ſuppreſſes, and ſometimes 'quite extinguiſhes a little Spark, that 'would otherwiſe have grown up to a noble Flame †.'

* Ut hoſpitia multa habeant, amicitias nullas, Ne confuſa & vaga Lectio ſit, aut deſultoria & interrupta. Hoc pleriſque evenit; & velut ex equo in equum ſe trajiciunt, ab hoc Scriptore in alium, ab iſto Argumento in illud: quo fructu? momentaneæ voluptatis, & ut tempus ſuum, imo & ſe fallant. *Lipſius, Epiſ. ad Hacquevillium.*

† *Eſſay on Learning.*

Now

Now to bring theſe general Reflexions home to the Subject of *Divinity*; I ſhall make the Application in the Words of *Leſſius* *. 'Let every thing, ſays he, be ſo explained as to leave no Obſcurity in any part of it; and yet ſo as to leave room for the Reader's Genius and Reflexion, whoſe Mind is not to be oppreſſed with too much reading: for an attentive conſideration of a few matters improves the Underſtanding, and ſtirs up the Affections more powerfully than much reading and a long Deduction of Arguments: This, however, when the Subject requires it, ſhould not be wanting.'

Though I am very ſenſible you ought, and can allow but very little time to human Literature during your Theological Studies,

* Omnia ſic explicentur, ut intelligi poſſit ratio ſingulorum, & ut locus ingenio & meditationi Lectoris relinquatur; neque mens multâ lectione obruatur. Plus enim illuſtrat mentem, ac potentiùs movet affectum intenta paucarum rerum conſideratio, quàm multa lectio longuſque multorum argumentorum diſcurſus; qui tamen, ubi res poſtulat, non deſit. *Præf. ad Opuſcula Theol.*

yet

yet I would by no means have you neglect, and quite lay it aſide. * Some Relaxation may be very properly allowed, and that which is taken from polite Learning, as it unbends, ſo it poliſhes and perfects the Mind, refines and gives vigour to the Imagination, ſtrengthens Reaſon, and forms true Taſte and Judgment. *Sadoletus* (for I muſt ſtill borrow aſſiſtance from his Authority) in a Letter to Cardinal *Pole*, ſets forth the account we are to make of the different Branches of Learning by the following Alluſion; † 'That 'it is the buſineſs of a prudent Oeconomiſt 'to take care of the preſervation and wel-'fare of the whole Family, not of ſome 'one Part only; but ſtill ſo to temper the 'care of the whole, that the moſt valuable 'Parts be chiefly looked after.'——When you think fit either to refreſh or enlarge your

* Non obſtant hæ Diſciplinæ per illas euntibus, ſed circa illas hærentibus. *Quinctil.*

† Eſſe boni Patrisfamilias totius domûs tutelam & procurationem, non unius duntaxat partis gerere; verùm ita totius, ut potiſſimæ quæque in eâ diligentiùs curentur partes. *Epiſtol.* L. 8. *Epiſ.* 4.

knowledge in Philoſophy, beſides the review of the Lectures you have already received, you may read *du Hamel's* * *Philoſophy adapted to the uſe of Schools*, which is an elegant and judicious Work; and Experience taught the *Jeſuits* in their foreign Miſſions, that it was of greater ſervice to them than any other of the kind.——*Strada's* † *Academical Entertainments*, *Fenelon's Reflexions on Grammar, Poetry*, &c. *Longinus, on the Sublime*, and ſuch like Writings will preſerve and improve the juſtneſs of your Notions, and rather further than be a hindrance to more ſerious Studies.—I could read *Juvenci's* little Book ‡ *of the Method of learning and teaching*, with Pleaſure and Advantage, every year.—A late *Engliſh* Tranſlation of the *Greek Critic*, with Notes and Obſervations by Mr. *Smith*, does Credit to the Author, and reflects a Luſtre on *Longinus* himſelf. As converſant as you are in the Original Language, you cannot but be highly pleaſed with this Performance.

* *Philoſophia ad uſum Scholæ accommodata.*

† *Proluſiones Academicæ, Reflexions ſur la Grammaire*, &c.

‡ *De ratione diſcendi & docendi.*

—The *Reflexions on the Character of Iapis*, in *Virgil*, by Dr. *Atterbury*, are an Inſtance of the fineſt and moſt uſeful Criticiſm, exemplified in one Subject, though applicable to a thouſand.——And who can read the Account Mr. *Warburton* has given of the *Eluſinian* Rites, without admiring a ſuperior Erudition, and ſtrength of Thought joined to equal Delicacy and Correctneſs? Part of the *Sixth* Book of the *Eneid* was almoſt as myſterious as the *Rites* themſelves of *Ceres*, till this Gentleman, by an effort of Genius peculiarly his own, had ſhowed that the chief Intent of the Poet was to be explained by an Alluſion to thoſe *Ceremonies*.——You will find in ſeveral other ſhort Works of our Countrymen as much Diſcernment and Taſte, as in the moſt celebrated Productions of the Ancients, or modern Authors of other Nations.

GREAT care, however, ſhould be taken that theſe youthful Studies do not take up too much of your Time; and this not only when they would manifeſtly interfere with others more ſuited to your preſent Situation;

but afterwards, when you have more leiſure, and are free to employ it as you pleaſe: * 'For we are not to be always learning theſe 'things, but ought to have already learnt 'them; and only allot them that Vacancy 'which is leſs fit for things of more ſerious 'Conſequence.'

THE neceſſity of a foreign Education is apt to render thoſe who lie under it, very imperfect in their own Language: and as this Diſadvantage takes off from the Merit of many good and valuable Qualifications, and makes Attainments in every branch of ſacred Literature, not only leſs ornamental but leſs uſeful, great care ſhould be taken to be correct and accurate, at leaſt, in our native Tongue.

ONE great Advantage which will accrue from this, is an Eaſe in ſpeaking in public:

* Non diſcere debemus iſta, ſed didiciſſe.

Tamdiu iſtis immorandum eſt, quamdiu nil agere majus animus poteſt. *Seneca.*

Rudimenta enim hæc noſtra eſſe debent, non opera: via, non meta.

for

for when the *Mind* is fraught with ſuch Knowledge as I have endeavoured to recommend through this Diſſertation, and the *Tongue* prepared to give it Utterance, nothing but *Uſe* can be wanting to form a Chriſtian Speaker. I think it therefore a matter of great Moment that all young Divines ſhould be very early initiated in this Practice, as being eſſential to their Calling, and which ſeveral of them will have occaſion to exerciſe as long as they live. Some Preparation will at firſt be neceſſary; but Habit will gradually wear away the Difficulty, and make them every Day more ready. And let it be remembered, I am not forming an Orator to make a diſplay of Eloquence before a Profane Audience, but one who is to explain and inforce the Chriſtian Doctrine in ſuch a manner as may reach the Hearts and reform the Lives of his Hearers. This will ſufficiently qualify him to *preach*, not himſelf, indeed, *but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* With this View, therefore, let an *Engliſh* Divine not appear a *Foreigner* in his *own Country*.

But let no Temptation of Pleaſure or Curioſity, no pretext of poliſhing either your Mind or Language, prevail on you to read any Work in which Revelation and the ſacred Truths of Religion are treated with Diſreſpect.——For Inſtance, the CHARACTERISTICS.——And here let me ſtop a while at this celebrated Name, this prime Idol of Unbelievers, * *this ſounding Braſs and tinckling Cymbol.* I am perſuaded a ſecret tendency to Infidelity, the capital Crime of a ſuperficial and ſenſual Age, has contributed more to the Reputation of this Work, than the acknowledged ingenuity and politeneſs of thoſe Parts of it, where the Subject is mere Literature. This unhappy biaſs on the Mind has not only made the Free-thinker pleaſed with the open and concealed Profaneneſs and Irreligion, which are liberally ſcattered thro' this motly Performance; but alſo overlook the frequent ſtiffneſs and Pedantry of the Stile, the weak and falſe Reaſoning, and the low and ungentlemanlike Abuſe, which would have given great offence in any Writing, deſigned to recommend Religion, inſtead of de-

* 1 *Corinthians*, ch. 13.

preciating

preciating it. But the Author has taken every Opportunity, not only in theſe Eſſays, but elſewhere, to improve in his Admirers a diſregard to Revelation, and let his other Readers obſerve, with what Diſcernment he was gifted, wherever thoſe Subjects are in Queſtion, which are founded on it. This remarkable Sagacity made him diſcover 'that Dr. 'Burnet was the greateſt Pillar of the Church 'ſince its firſt Founders *: and that *Origen*, 'the *good Father*, was the beſt of thoſe *they* 'call ſo.' The ſame juſtneſs made him adviſe a Student at the Univerſity, who was preparing for holy Orders, to read, not the *Scriptures*, or ſuch *Authors* as expound and inforce the Doctrine contained in them, but *Simplicius* and *Epictetus*, and, *when he was more advanced*, the *divine Plato*. The wild Abſurdities, with which the Morality of the Latter is ſo frequently blended, ought, one would think, to have controuled ſuch Advice, and checked any Suggeſtion, that *Abana and Pharphar, the Rivers of* Damaſcus, *were better than all the Waters of* Iſrael †. But be-

* *Letters to a Student*, Letter 7 and 5.

† 4th *Kings*, ch. 5.

cauſe this Philoſopher teaches nothing beyond the reach of unaſſiſted Reaſon, and was, moreover, a polite Writer, and a Heathen, theſe Advantages were too great not to make that proud *Scorner* give him the preference to any of the *Diſciples* of the humble *Jeſus*, however recommendable for the purity of their Doctrine, their Learning and Eloquence *.——A Writer of equal Judgment and Penetration has ſet the *Characteriſtics* in their real and genuine Light, and vindicated good Senſe and Religion without any treſpaſs on Decency and good Breeding; in both which Qualifications Dr. *Brown* has the Advantage of the noble Lord, as much as in Cauſe and Argument. He has ſhown the wily Author, like the Tempter, to have only a gloſſy outſide, and to be a Reptile as to all the reſt; that no confidence can be placed in his Abilities, no ſtreſs laid on his Arguments; that his genius creeps, and his pride

* Quòd ſi quæ de Deo à Philoſophis dicta ſunt cum ſolidâ Theologorum doctrinâ comparare libuerit, reperiemus hos quidem certa omnia, & explorata, & ſalutaria tradere; illos neque ſatis quod dicunt intelligere, & credula ingenia pernicioſiſſimarum opinionum laqueis implicare. *Muretus.*

licks

licks the Duſt. He has followed him thro' all the Mazes, of Ribaldry miſtaken for Wit, Spleen and Affectation for Elegance, and Buffoonery for Humour. He has detected idle Sophiſtry in the diſguiſe of Philoſophy, a contempt and hatred of revealed Religion, under an appearance of zeal for moral Virtue; and, at length, buried the mad Aſſailant of Chriſtianity in the heaps he had raiſed againſt it.

Doctor *Conyers Middleton* (though ſuch a *Title* is beſtowed on ſuch a *Writer* with the ſame Propriety as *Lucus* is derived *à non lucendo)* for the honour of the *Chriſtian* Cauſe has met with the ſame fate from Mr. *Walton*, who has ſhown, in a very accurate and ſatisfactory manner, *the Free Inquiry* to be nothing more than a licentious and profane Miſrepreſentation of whatever is true and ſacred, and no leſs an inſult on Reaſon and Equity than on Religion. And as this Performance is as much diſtinguiſhed for Piety as for good Senſe and Erudition, it cannot fail of pleaſing every Reader who ſeeks Truth, and has Diſcernment to reliſh thoſe Qualities

Qualities which adorn it, ſtrength of Argument, Order, and Perſpicuity *.

But that the boldeſt Invader of the rights of Heaven might find an Antagoniſt of Abilities equal to his own Folly, Pride, and Impiety (than which no Character can be higher) the overthrow of *Bolingbroke* was reſerved to the genius of a *Warburton*.

† A perverseness of a different kind from that of the above-mentioned Champions of darkneſs, has produced another Set of Writers, who have deſerved almoſt as ill of Mankind as the Author of the *Characteriſtics*; and are therefore to be avoided as the very bane of Virtue and good Senſe. Theſe, under the pretence of giving a *general* Picture of human Nature, have copied only the *exceptionable* and *vicious* Parts of it: and their Philoſophy, inſtead of being a true *hiſtory* of

* *Printed for* Needham, *over-againſt* Gray's-Inn-Gate, 1756.

† Præpoſteri homines, quibus nihil penſi eſt evertere omnia, dummodo cæteris doctiores acutioreſve videantur, ac ſine more modoque, graviſſimo in argumento ludant. *Boſſuet, Diſſert. in Pſal.* c. 1. n. 6.

Man,

Man, has been a *Satir* on his Defects and Failings. Lord *Shafteſbury*, with a view to depreciate Religion, and vilify thoſe Lights and Succours which our Ignorance and Weakneſs derive from it, extolled moral Virtue beyond its due Sphere, and raiſed Man to a fantaſtic Height, from which his Fall muſt be more ruinous: Theſe have reverſed this Author's Folly, and ſunk Man ſo much below his real Excellence, as to repreſent him void of all Pretenſions to Goodneſs, and incapable of any moral Perfection. But neither of theſe Syſtems (if Dr. *Brown* will give me leave to take a Metaphor from his excellent Eſſays) being faſtened to the Throne of Truth, they hang trembling from a ſhadowy and aerial Fabric, blown up by ſportive Imagination.——I ſhall produce an Inſtance of the latter kind of Writing from the *Maxims* or *moral Reflexions* of the Duke of *Rochefoucaud*; a ſmaller, but not leſs celebrated Piece than the *Characteriſtics*. Numberleſs Readers have been wrapt up in the merit of a Work, which ſeems to Fathom the Heart of Man, and unfold all its Intricacies, and diſcover its moſt ſecret Springs: and all this in a new

and

and polite manner. Now to ſpeak my own Sentiments, the Performance itſelf has no better Title to *Maxims*, under which it made its firſt Appearance, than the Obſervations contained in it, to Juſtneſs and Truth. For *Maxims* are Truths grounded on firſt Principles, and generally underſtood and received: and therefore cannot be applied to ſuch Aſſertions as are new, abſtruſe, little known, and the mere reſult of Subtilty and Refinement; which is the Character of thoſe under Conſideration. An attentive Peruſal will diſcover the Firſt of them, that *all our Virtues are but Vices in diſguiſe*, to be as a Text, enlarged on and applied through the Work, and which the Author has endeavoured to exemplify at the expence of Candour and Juſtice; ſetting human Actions in the moſt unfair and diſagreeable Light, and interpreting the moſt harmleſs Intentions with Prejudice and Malignity. Vanity and Diſingenuity, the two grand Weakneſſes of all ſuch Writers, furniſh a great Part of the Articles; in which, quaintneſs of Expreſſion is viſibly the Aim, rather than juſtneſs of Sentiment; and general and atrocious Accuſations are

brought

brought againſt Mankind, that *Monſieur de la Rochefoucaud* may find room for a witty and well turned Saying.——It may ſeem ſtrange that Men ſhould be pleaſed with ſo ill-favoured, and, at the ſame time, ſo unlike a Picture of themſelves, eſpecially in a Piece which carries with it an Air of Diſcernment and Sincerity; whereas each Perſon in particular would look on it as the higheſt Indignity to have the tenth Part of the Charge fixt on himſelf. Nor is it leſs matter of Wonder, to reflect, that the Philoſophical Writings of *Epictetus*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch* and *Cicero* are as much ſuperior in *weight* of Matter, *worth* and *importance* of Subject, *ſoundneſs* of Argument, *life* of Invention and *depth* of Judgment, to all the Froth and Fallacy of theſe Sophiſters, as the pure and genuine Light of Nature and Reaſon is to the *ignis fatuus* of looſe and wanton Fancy. ——The Pleaſure and Improvement which is propoſed from ſuch Works, puts me in Mind of the Occupation which *Milton* has aſſigned to the fallen Angels:

Others apart ſat on a Hill retired,
In thought more elevate, and reaſon'd high. . .
Of Good and Evil much they argued then. . .
Vain Wiſdom all and vain Philoſophy!
Yet with a pleaſing Sorcery could charm,
&c. *Par. L. B. 2. V. 557.*

And as to the Leaders themſelves in this dark Undertaking to degrade Nature and pervert Reaſon, muſt it not be owned that they have pointed out a Path to their Followers, which bears too near a reſemblance to that in the dreary Regions, through which the *Poet* leads his Travellers?

Ibant obſcuri, ſolâ ſub Nocte, per Umbram,
Perque Domos Ditis vacuas, & inania Regna *.

In which Deſcription there is not one Idea; no, not a ſingle word, which, in a moral Senſe, is not emphatically true of theſe †

* *Æn.* L. 6. † *Baruch*, ch. 3d.

'Sons of Agar, who ſeek after the Wiſ-
'dom that is of the Earth.——Theſe Tellers
'of Fables, and Searchers after Prudence and
'Underſtanding, but who know not the
'ways of Wiſdom, nor have her Paths in
'their Mind.' What Experience juſtifies, may be with freedom aſſerted, that they have bewildered their Diſciples in the endleſs Intricacies of Fancy and Hypotheſis, and, in the End, left them expoſed and defenceleſs amidſt all the Attacks of Scepticiſm and Infidelity. And the Concluſion which every thinking Perſon muſt draw, is, * 'That God choſe
'them not, nor ſhewed them the way of
'Knowledge; that they periſhed becauſe they
'were unprovided of true Prudence, they
'periſhed through their own Folly.'

But the Caution you are to uſe in Reading would be very inſufficient, was it only to warn you againſt ſuch Authors as are profeſſedly dangerous or pernicious. You muſt extend it to all Works, by whoſoever wrote, and however recommendable on other Accounts, which are infected with Errors and

* *Baruch*, ibid.

Hereſies,

Hereſies, or incline, by a ſecret Biaſs, to what is leſs laudable either in Opinion or Practice. And it would ſeem ſtrange that a *Chriſtian*, and eſpecially a *Divine*, ſhould think the contrary Method warrantable, or conſiſtent with the Morals of the *Catholick Church*. If ſo plain a Truth needed to be ſupported by Authority, I might cite that of St. *Baſil*, 'that a Religious Man is not only 'to abhor all erroneous Doctrine, but to 'read no Books which are not wrote with an 'Orthodox Spirit, and approved by the 'Church: becauſe the Words of the Ungod-'ly, according to the *Apoſtle*, are a Gan-'grene, which by degrees vitiates and taints 'all that is ſound.' The good Opinion we entertain of the Work, as St. *Ignatius* has obſerved, paſſes inſenſibly to the Author; and has frequently ſuch an Influence as to make every thing he ſays, ſeem reaſonable. Beſides, all moral and ſacred Subjects have, I preſume, been treated, with greater Advantage, by Writers, whoſe Doctrine is above any Exception; who had their ſhare of Learning no leſs than thoſe of a different Character, and were, moreover, enlightened by

the

the Sun of Truth and Righteouſneſs, in compariſon of which the oblique Rays of all human Underſtanding, in what regards Religion, are no better than Illuſion and Darkneſs *.——What I have here ſaid, reminds me to obſerve, that in *the Elevations of the Mind on the Myſteries*, wrote by *Boſſuet*, and mentioned in another part of this Diſcourſe, there are ſome Propoſitions which, taken in rigour, favour the Errors of *Janſenius*. They are ſuppoſed, indeed, to have been inſerted by the Editors of this Poſthumous Work of the Biſhop of *Meaux*, who were Abetters of that Sect, that Prelate's Character and all his other Writings being perfectly clear from any ſuch Imputation.

† My Deſign in this Diſcourſe has been to give you a right Notion, and trace out ſuch a Plan

* Lumen mentis humanæ Deus eſt, quem qui cognoverit, & in pectus admiſerit, illuminato corde Myſterium Veritatis agnoſcet: remoto autem Deo cæleſtíque Doctrinâ, omnia erroribus plena ſunt. *Lact.*

† Atque hæc omnia, pro rerum quidem magnitudine breviter præſtiti. Nec enim ad diſputationes & amœnitates

a Plan of *Eccleſiaſtical Studies*, as I thought moſt conducive to public and private Benefit. With this View I have ſet down not only what I would have you follow, but likewiſe what, in my opinion, you ſhould avoid: the Knowledge of both being equally neceſſary to the End I propoſe. I have given you briefly my Reaſons for whatever I have advanced on either of theſe Heads. The Plan is drawn, not for Oſtentation, or from Theory alone, but from Practice and ſome Experience. * I have opened the *Fountains* of ſacred Knowledge, deduced the *Streams*, and directed you to follow them in their *Courſe*, and, above all, to obſerve their *Effects*: And, if I am not too partial to my own way of thinking, you have in this Diſcourſe a ſufficient Guide in two important Enquiries, *the Choice and Method* of your

me diffudi; ſed preſſis habenis currum hunc, ut ſic dicam, continui intra orbitas *Uſûs* & *Actionis*. *Lipſius, Præf. in Doc. Civ.*

* Vis enim & Natura rei, niſi perfectè ante oculos ponatur, qualis & quanta ſit, intelligi non poteſt. *Cicer. de Ora.*

Studies.

Studies. The greater and more uſeful Part of what I have taken the liberty to offer, has been drawn from Obſervation rather than Reading, and more deference paid through the whole to Wiſdom than to Learning, to Reaſon than to Authority, or Cuſtom; and to real and univerſal Uſe than to any other Conſideration. * *To be, rather than ſeem to be,* is the Character I would aim at, both in my Studies and Manners; and ſhall always look on *Learning* rather as a *Means* to perfect the Mind, than the *Mind* as an *Inſtrument* to acquire Learning. Was I to begin again the Study of *Divinity*, I would follow the Method laid down here, and am ſo convinced of its Uſefulneſs that I have purſued it for ſeveral Years, and will continue to go on with it as long as I live. I do not ſay this as any Argument of the Expediency of the Rule, but of his Candour and Sincerity who preſcribes it.

Besides your Requeſt, I had another View in putting together the Materials of this Diſ-

* Eſſe quàm videri.

courſe.——* It has been an Occaſion of recapitulating the ſeveral Heads of a Science, which very agreeably fills up the leiſure Hours of a Country Retirement; and, like a Picture drawn from Life (if the Sentiment be not too vain) has given me back the Image of myſelf.

† It has likewiſe afforded me an Opportunity of making a grateful, though ſlender Acknowledgment to a Body of Men, for the Entertainment and Benefit I have received from the Writings of thoſe Perſons, who have been the Ornament of it.

‡ I HAVE, moreover, endeavoured to make the

* Nam & amœnis in locis ſumus, quodque cunctorum maximum eſt, quæcunque pacem & tranquillitatem animi turbare poſſunt, omnia penitus ex animo ipſo ejecimus atque expulimus. Itaque nihil jam cogitamus, niſi cum *Philoſophia* habere rationem. *Sadolet. ad P. Bembum.*

† Amicum me toti Societati veſtræ eſſe, quidni profitear? quæ prima litteris his aliiſque me imbuit, quæ ſalutaria in omnem vitam præcepta dedit & præivit. *J. Lipſius, Epiſ. ad M. Ruderum. S. J.*

‡ In hanc Sententiam non ſanè ut primùm ejuſmodi res tractare

the Studies I have treated of, appear no leſs noble and agreeable, than they are uſeful and ſolid; being perſuaded that the chief Reaſon why ſo many young Men apply themſelves to them with ſuch Unwillingneſs, at the Univerſity; and lay them quite aſide, on leaving it, is, becauſe they conſider them in a Light which repreſents them as laborious, abſtracted, and barren. They are tempted to think, it can be of no great Conſequence to be acquainted with things, which are taught in a dry and tireſome manner, which are ſeldom the Subject even of ſerious Converſation, and have little Relation with the buſineſs and duties of Life. To this is owing that gloomy and diſagreeable Notion they entertain of *Theology*. No Attendant of Pleaſure's ſmiling Train is ſuppoſed to wait on this divine Science: Her conſtant Company is the whole Family of conſtraint.——It has been remarked, indeed, on Methods of Teaching, in general,

tractare cœpi, ſtatim adductus ſum; ſed poſt multas cogitationes, ac per quoſdam quaſi gradus, ad eam acceſſi: ut non temerè, illâ inventâ, Finem progrediendi feciſſe, atque in eâ quieviſſe videar.

that they place whatever is agreeable on one ſide, and what is painful on the other: Drudgery on that of Study, and Pleaſure on being relieved from it. The Part therefore that a Student takes in ſuch Caſes, is, to ſubmit to the Subjection with an ill Grace, and get rid of it as ſoon as he can. * The Obſervation may be carried ſtill higher, and that univeral Diſreliſh for every kind of literary Improvement, which is ſo remarkable in ſome Churchmen, can be aſſigned to no other Cauſe, than the unpleaſing manner in which they learnt the higher Sciences. They ſee all Learning through that wrong *Medium*, by which their ſhare of it was conveyed. On the ſtrength of this Prejudice, the moſt trifling Amuſements and very indifferent Company are preferred to the Pleaſure of reading the beſt and moſt entertaining Authors, and

* Ille enim *Decori* ſplendor, quo ad Dei proximè imitationem accedimus, uſque adeò hoc tempore oppreſſus & perturbatus eſt, ut ne minimam quidem partem luminis ſui videatur obtinere: qui tamen è Philoſophiâ bonis ingeniis inferendus atque inſinuandus eſt; ſi qui videlicet ſunt, qui verè magni viri, & in ſe ipſis perfecti homines cupiant evadere. *Sadolet. Epiſ. ad Ran. Farneſium, Card.*

making

making their own Reflexions on them. Hence pious and judicious Men have ſometimes thought they had Cauſe to lament * *the holy Place laid waſte, the Altar profaned, and the Stones of the Sanctuary ſcattered in all the high Ways.* A Diſeſteem for the *Perſon*, and, what is worſe, by an unfair, yet too common Concluſion, a Diſregard for the *Profeſſion*, is the Effect of ſuch Improprieties. And thoſe who fall into them, experience the very reverſe of what was ſaid of the Images of *Brutus* and *Caſſius* on Occaſion of their not being ſeen at *Junia's* Funeral, *eo ipſo præfulgebant, quòd non viſebantur.*

It will likewiſe appear from what has been ſaid, that *Divinity* is not that abſtruſe and inacceſſible thing, the Laity are apt to imagine it: but a Science full of Light and Satisfaction, adapted even to moderate Capacities, attainable by moderate Application, and ſuitable, in ſome Degree, to Men of all Profeſſions, who have had the advantage of a liberal Education, and have leiſure to read, and a Diſpoſition to reflect. St. *Auſtin* and

* *Macch.* L. 1. cap. 4. & *Lament.* c. 4.

St. *Hierom* explained the moſt difficult Parts of *Scripture*, and even ſome curious Speculations and Subtilties to Courtiers, Officers in the Army, and Governors of Provinces. And when the latter of theſe holy and diſcreet Doctors performed the ſame Office to *Roman* Ladies of the firſt Quality, he did not think the Employment unbecoming either Himſelf or Them. And if my own Country Women, who are not inferior in ſenſe or goodneſs of Diſpoſition to thoſe of any other Climate, would allow me to make the Application to themſelves; ſome of that Time, which they ſeem ſo much at a Loſs to fill up, ſhould be given to an humble and attentive reading of the *Scriptures*. This, however, muſt be undertaken with ſuch Cautions, and under ſuch Reſtrictions as alone can make the Occupation uſeful, and, perhaps, even adviſeable to the Sex. Next to the Scriptures, the Hiſtory of the Church, and Books of Chriſtian Morality might ſhare their leiſure. Such a Method, I am perſuaded, would render their Lives much more agreable than they now are, even in the higheſt and moſt opulent Stations; the Duties of the ſeveral

Relations

Relations of Life would be complied with more exactly; and *England*, as well as *Rome*, might boaſt her *Paula's*, *Algaſias's* and *Marcella's*. I muſt confeſs the Men ſhould ſet the Example in an affair, in which it would not be to their Commendation to have copied only that of the other Sex: and without expecting they ſhould lay aſide innocent and moderate Diverſions, much leſs neglect to diſcharge what they owe to the Public, and to their own Families; my reſpect for their Perſons and my zeal for their Salvation makes me earneſtly deſire, that ſpiritual Culture and Improvement was more the buſineſs of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom, than at preſent it ſeems to be.——It is, indeed, too melancholy a Truth, as Sir *William Temple* has ſomewhere obſerved, that though leiſure and ſolitude are the beſt Effect of Riches, as giving us the opportunities for Thought and Reflexion, yet they are generally avoided by the Rich; who by ſeeking Company and Amuſements plainly ſhow they are Strangers to what, next to doing Good, is the greateſt advantage of Wealth.——But, ſure, Perſons in the moſt exalted Fortune can eſteem

teem it no impropriety to be refered to a Duke of *Montauſier*, who, amidſt the tumult of a Camp, the diſtractions of a Court, and the cares of the *Dauphin*'s Education read the *New Teſtament*, in *Greek*, a hundred and twenty times, with all the attention due to that ſacred Work.——When I was in *France*, I was acquainted with an Officer of the Train, as converſant in ſacred Literature as moſt Divines; and eſteemed by the Gentlemen of his profeſſion for his Bravery, and by the Women for his Breeding.

And now, to return from a Digreſſion, by no means foreign to my Purpoſe, and, in itſelf, of very great Importance: If in this Eſſay I have any where departed from the ordinary ways of the School, my Reaſons for ſo doing, will, I believe, be my Juſtification rather than my Excuſe *. For though I have no pretenſion to apply to the *Divine* I have endeavoured to form, what *Cicero* ſays

* Amentis eſt enim ſuperſtitione præceptorum contra rationem cauſæ trahi. *Quint.*

of

of his *Orator*, * 'That he had taken the 'Model, not from common Notions, but 'from the Rules of true Science, and had col-'lected all the Precepts and Obſervations of 'the moſt excellent Maſters in the Art he 'was treating of;' yet I ſhould be wanting to Sincerity, and even deſerve leſs well of you, did I not acknowledge, I have had an Eye to the ſame Original; and now the Model is finiſhed, I ſend it with a good Will, at leaſt, equal to that which accompanied thoſe famous *Dialogues* from the Parent of *Roman* Eloquence to young *Lentulus*.

It may, perhaps, betray a weakneſs to confeſs, that the Novelty of the Subject has conduced, not a little, to make me go thorough the Performance with alacrity. For though there may be, for any thing I know, ſeveral Methods, Treatiſes, and Eſſays on the Study of *Divinity*; it is a Teſtimony I

* Scripſi igitur *Ariſtoteleo* more Libros de Oratore, quos arbitror Lentulo tuo non fore inutiles: abhorrent enim à communibus præceptis; ac omnem Antiquorum, & *Ariſtoteleam* & *Iſocrateam* rationem oratoriam complectuntur. *Epiſ. Fam.* 1. 9.

owe

owe to Truth when I tell you, I never ſaw one that has any Affinity with this. And the Production, as well as the Conduct of the Piece being my own, it has been wrote from Perſuaſion and Sentiment; and, I hope, with a View to recommend, not myſelf, but the Subject.

* I WISH all Clergy-men were, in ſome degree at leaſt, bleſt with a ſtudious Diſpoſition, as it would go a great way towards making them valuable, good, and happy. This turn of Mind would cauſe them to avoid the World and worldly Converſation; would give them a love of Silence and Retirement, and an eaſe in uniting themſelves with God, and finding that Tranquillity they ſought for in liſting in his Service. They would be but little ſenſible to the Allurements of external Objects, and to thoſe Trifles and Impropriе-

* Nulla poteſt nobis eſſe præſtantior actio, neque ad naturam vitamque accommodatior, quàm nobis-met-ipſis, qui in ordine rerum ſummum propè & nobiliſſimum genus ſumus, rectè, & commodè, & convenienter uti; in quo & Naturæ noſtræ perfectio maximè ineſt, & vitæ vera fælicitas. *Sadolet. de laud. Philoſ.*

ties,

ties, which diſgrace the *Man*, and quite degrade the *Prieſt*.——For you will almoſt always obſerve, that knowing and judicious Perſons, who have inured themſelves to ſerious Studies, are little ſubject to theſe Weakneſſes. The Knowledge they are poſſeſſed of, is of ſo ſuperior a kind, that it gives them a juſt Contempt for numberleſs things they are ignorant of, and which are not worth knowing; at the ſame time that it takes away all reliſh for the low joys and pleaſures of the Vulgar. They ſee the emptineſs and folly of thoſe Amuſements, with which little Minds, who know nothing and have nothing to do, are taken up; and conſider thoſe, who are addicted to them, with the ſame pity as a ſober Man does one intoxicated with Liquor. It is the ill-inſtructed and unemployed, whoſe imagination is always wandering and on float: for want of ſolid Nouriſhment their Curioſity and Appetites turn to Objects which are either vain or dangerous; and hence proceed all thoſe Inventions for ſquandering away Thought and Time, which generally end in a forgetfulneſs of God and our ſelves.

WHILST we continue at College, the leiſure and opportunities of making a progreſs in Learning are ſo great, and the benefits ariſing from ſuch Improvement ſo conſiderable, that *Platus* has with reaſon placed them amongſt the principal Advantages of a Religious Life, in a very edifying and entertaining Chapter on that Subject *. When we have finiſhed our Studies, and are left to our own Diſpoſal, it is incredible what Inconveniencies are avoided by thoſe, who can ſpend their leiſure Hours with Books and their own Thoughts. He is truly happy, ſays an *Italian* Philoſopher, who content with the Satisfaction that ariſes from Learning and Retirement, lives, as much as he can, within himſelf, and neither deſires nor aims at any thing beyond ſuch a Situation †.

'HAPPY they, ſays the Archbiſhop of 'Cambray, who are diſguſted with violent

* Lib. 3. ch. 11.

† Illum ego fælicem inde à puero duxi, qui libris otioque literario contentus, intra fortunam vivere didicit, &, quantùm poteſt, in ſeſe habitans, nihil extra ſe ipſum ſuſpirat & ambit. *Mazzonius.*

'Pleaſures, and know how to be pleaſed
'with the Sweets of an innocent Life!
'Happy they who delight in Inſtruction,
'and find a Satisfaction in cultivating their
'Minds with Knowledge! into whatever Si-
'tuation adverſe Fortune may throw them,
'they always carry Entertainment with them,
'and the Diſquiet which preys on others in
'the midſt of Pleaſures, is unknown to
'thoſe who can employ themſelves in reading.
'Happy they who love to read *.'

THERE is, indeed, but one Limitation needful on this Subject, which is, that whilſt we neglect nothing that can advance us in Literature, we guard againſt that immoderate Eagerneſs of it, which is common to Perſons of Genius and Application †. This Intemperance of the Underſtanding dries up the Spirit, and cools the Fervour of Devotion. Knowledge, however valuable, ſhould be al-

* *Telem.* L. 2.

† Studio Scientiæ flagrantem animum coercuit, tenuitque quod eſt difficillimum, ex Sapientiâ modum. *Tac. in Agric.*

ways

ways ſubſervient to Virtue: This alone has a right to engroſs our chief Attention, as it alone renders Learning uſeful to promote the glory of God, and the ſalvation and perfection of our Neighbour; the two great Purpoſes, to which not only our Studies, but the reſt of our Occupations are to be refered.——It is related, as a particular Commendation, in the Life of St. *Lewis Gonzaga*, the Pattern of Religious Students, that he carefully avoided this Snare. And the pious Author of *the Imitation of Chriſt*, from the 'ſame Principle, cautions us againſt a too 'great thirſt of Knowledge, as the cauſe of 'much Diſtraction and Illuſion *.'

BUT who can read what a celebrated Scholar relates of himſelf, on this Head, without taking it as a Warning to avoid ſo blameable and dangerous an Exceſs? † 'I 'was

* *Imit. Chr.* L. 1. c. 2.

† Tranſverſum rapi me ſinebam deliciis Studiorum, quæ varietate rerum ita oppleverant pectus meum, omneſque ejus aditus obſepſerant, ut intimos illos & amabiles Dei congreſſus reſpueret.— Quâ animi in divinis rebus imbecillitate

'was entirely carried away, ſays he, by 'the pleaſure I found in Learning; and 'that endleſs variety which it affords had ſo 'taken up my Thoughts, and ſeized all the 'Avenues of my Mind, that I was altoge-'ther incapable of any ſweet and intimate 'Communication with God.——Theſe wan-'derings and Indiſpoſition of Mind have 'ever been my grand Failing, and they ſtill 'break in on my Prayers and quite deprive 'me of all the benefit I ſhould reap from 'them. . . When I withdrew into Religious 'Retirement, in order to recollect my ſcat-'tered Thoughts and fix them on heavenly 'Things, I experienced a drineſs and inſen-'ſibilty of Soul, by which the holy Spirit 'ſeemed to puniſh this exceſſive bent to

cillitate & laboravi per totam vitam, & nunc quoque frequens illa ac pæne continua mentis evagantis aberratio obtundit preces ad Deum meas, omnemque earum fructum penitùs intercipit. . . Cùmque ad confirmandos in animo meo pietatis ſenſus, concedebam in loca his uſibus opportuna. . . reflantem ſemper expertus ſum divinæ gratiæ, auram, quaſi vehementiorem meum in litteras impetum, ſegnioremque rerum divinarum curam ſtupore hoc Deus ulciſci vellet. *Huet, Comment. de rebus ſuis*, pag. 174.

'Learning, and the Indifference I had for 'my ſpiritual Advancement.'

ANOTHER Conſideration alſo, though of an inferior Order, ſhould check this eagerneſs and keep it within due Bounds; which is the prejudice it brings to Health, and to that freedom of Thought, and a certain Univerſality of Mind, which is preferable to any progreſs in Letters, even thoſe which moſt deſerve our Eſteem.

THIS Extreme being avoided, it requires no extraordinary Penetration to diſcover that Attainments, which take their riſe from juſt and elevated Notions of Theology, are purſued with a generous and Chriſtian Ardour of Mind, and end in the real and ſubſtantial Advantage which theſe Acquiſitions bring with them, are an Object truly worthy one * *of the choſen Race and the Kingly Prieſthood.*

WAS I to enumerate the various Ills I have ſeen, occaſioned merely from the want of an Inclination to read and think, it would

* 1 *Pet.* ch. 2.

make

make too unpleaſing a Picture to have a place in a Performance, which was deſigned for your Information, not as a cenſure on others; it not being my Intention to deſcend to perſonal Reproof, but to trace acknowledged Evils from their Cauſes down to their Effects *.——I believe you will be more edified with the Reflexions of a religious Man of the Order of *Celeſtines*, who died at *Paris* in the year 1492, and at the End of a Treatiſe he wrote on the Studies of Monks, 'Thanks God for having always been favoured with the love of Books and Truth, 'and a diſreliſh of all worldly and exterior 'Employments. He acknowledges that he 'had reaped, in the decline of Life, very pleaſant and wholeſome Fruits from this Diſpoſition, and exhorts the young Religious, 'on his own Example and Experience, to 'make Trial of it.' He ended his Days in Privacy, after having been raiſed to the firſt Offices of his *Order*, and been deputed into *Italy* to reform the Monaſteries of it.

* Verùm hæc omittamus, ne *minus gratiæ*, præcipiendo recta; quàm *offenſæ*, reprehendendo prava, mereamur. *Quint.*

FEW things could give me a more ſenſible Pleaſure than to ſee you verify in your own Perſon a behaviour and temper of Mind ſo ſuited both to your Profeſſion and Happineſs. Experience will convince you that it is * *a Path*, which, though troden only by the Judicious Few, *goes on, like a ſhining Light increaſing till Noon-day*. You have only to follow it with a conſtant and even Pace. One Proficiency will give birth to another; and the Perfection of ſacred Knowledge, which a Perſon thus qualified tends to, only ſeems removed at a Diſtance, in order to make him more earneſt to attain it. And when he ſtops at any Period of his Life to reflect on the Progreſs he has made, he will do it with the Satisfaction of a Traveller, who, in a long and agreeable Journey, looks back, from an Eminence, on the Road he has paſt, and recollects the many pleaſing Incidents of it.

† AND though the Conduct of a Divine

* *Prov.* ch. 4. *v.* 18.

† Eſt enim quiddam, quò ego aſpirare conor, quod utique eſſe ſtatuo cæteris rebus præſtantius. *Sadolet. Epiſ. ad P. Bembum.*

ſhould,

ſhould, by way of excellence, be exempt from all groſſer Faults, and adorned with every Moral and Chriſtian Virtue; yet, that I may confine myſelf to what is properly the purpoſe of this Diſcourſe, I ſhall only warn you againſt ſuch Failings, as, like certain Diſeaſes to ſome Conſtitutions, are ſuppoſed to be peculiar to Men of Learning: and point out to your Practice thoſe Qualities, which caſt a kind of Sunſhine over the Behaviour of a Scholar; and, like a gentle Smile, light up the ſedate and ſerious Countenance of *Theology*.——This Caution is particularly ſeaſonable, as you are coming into a World, where the pureſt and beſt guarded Virtue is beheld with a jealous, and often, with a ſcornful Eye. Let your Conduct, therefore, be ſuch as by no Improprieties to injure a Cauſe, which all your Care will be little enough to recommend.——It has been objected to the Learned, that they do not ſufficiently attend to the End of Knowledge, and of that Labour which is employed to gain it: but ſeem to ſtudy for ſtudying ſake, and to gratify an unreſtrained and lawleſs bent of Mind, in fruitleſs Speculation. And,

I fear, this Charge has been too well grounded, where an impotent Deſire of Knowing has taken its full Range, before Judgment checked this Impetuoſity, and admoniſhed the Learner to conſider, what was to be the Goal of ſo rapid a Race, and the Reward of ſo much Pains. This, however, ought to have been the primary Inquiry, as moſt ſuited to the Dignity of our Nature, and of the greateſt Uſe towards the Succeſs of every rational Undertaking. For to what Purpoſe is ſo much Application, if from a Thirſt of Knowledge nothing be acquired but freſh Drought? if the end of one Purſuit be but the beginning of another; and we are always in that ſort of Agitation, which ſeems to conſider Reſt as what we would not wiſh to attain, but avoid? Now this Miſtake will either be avoided or corrected by looking on Learning, of what kind ſoever, as the Means, not the End, we are to propoſe to ourſelves in all our literary Purſuits, which are always to be refered to the Chriſtian Culture of our Minds, in order to form them for Action, to public and private Good; and, conſequently, the Choice of our Studies, the Time and Appli-

cation

cation we beſtow on them, the Place they hold in our Eſteem, are to be regulated by the Relation they have to theſe Objects, from which *alone* they derive all their Value and Luſtre.——— This Conſideration, likewiſe, lets us ſee, how great their Error is, who look on Science as a ſort of riſing Ground, from whence they are beheld to Advantage; and look down on others with a vain Conceit of their own Superiority: or as a ſpacious and delightful Garden to wander in for Amuſement; or as a Mart of Lucre and Promotion.——Another Inconvenience incident to the Learned is, a Partiality to certain Opinions and Authors, which are ſet up, like *Hercules*'s Pillars, beyond which no Progreſs is attempted, or even ſuppoſed. The Schools, in which we have been educated, and the Societies, of Men, with which we are connected, are ſuch Prejudices in favour of their Tenets, that an Abatement of this Evil is rather to be expected, than a total Cure. But as for thoſe Antipathies and Enmities, which a difference of Opinions has occaſioned whole Bodies of Men to conceive againſt one another, they ſpring from a

Foundation not only unconnected with, but quite oppoſite to all liberal Science, and owe their Riſe to Paſſions, to which I hope your Breaſt will ever be a Stranger. This ungenerous and illiberal Diſpoſition is ſometimes carried ſo far, as to make Authors be diſregarded on no other account, than their being of ſuch or ſuch a Society: and all Excellence is overlooked, when it comes from a Quarter that has, perhaps, every other Merit, but that of being agreeable to us.

Hinc illæ Lacrymæ.——

'* But it were eligible, ſays a Pagan In-'ſtructor, to be born dumb, and deprived of 'the uſe of Reaſon, rather than thus to turn 'the gifts of Providence to our mutual De-'ſtruction.'——Too great Variety of reading, likewiſe, is apt to make Men curious and irreſolute; and thus Knowledge, which is nothing more than a Repreſentation of Truth, cauſes its proper Object to be neglected, miſtaken, or ſeen double, when the

* Mutos naſci, & egere omni ratione ſatiùs fuiſſet, quàm Providentiæ munera ad mutuam perniciem convertere. *Quint.*

Organ

Organ is unfit or vitiated. The ſtrictneſs of Rules, to which Schoolmen have been accuſtomed, has ſometimes a contrary Effect to the above-mentioned, and makes them peremtory and deciſive: the great Examples they have been converſant with, inclines them to Extremes; and the little Affinity thoſe Examples have with what is at preſent generally practiſed, gives them a certain Diſagreement, and, if I may ſo ſpeak, an incompatibility with the Times and Perſons amidſt whom they live. Now a true Scholar ſhould not only avoid theſe Failings, but improve the Sources from which they ſpring, to uſeful and generous Purpoſes. From much reading, inſtead of Perplexity, he ſhould gather plain Precepts, when and upon what Grounds to reſolve; and even how to ſuſpend his Judgment without Prejudice to his Underſtanding. Inſtead of too great Preciſion, he ſhould learn what things are demonſtrative, what only conjectural! and be as ſkilled in Diſtinctions and Exceptions, as in the Latitude of Rules and Precepts. The Diſſimilitude of ancient and modern Uſage, far from making him uneaſy under the preſent

Times,

Times, ſhould inſtruct him in the force of Circumſtances, the Errors of Compariſon, and all the Caution of Application.——Another capital Miſtake, which has diſappointed much Study and great Reading, is, the Neglect of being acquainted with ordinary and common Matters; whereas a judicious Direction in theſe, is the wiſeſt Inſtruction; unleſs we ſuppoſe Knowledge muſt be made up of Novelties and Subtilties; and that the Learned, like the Graſshopper, have nothing more to do, than to cherup, and ſkip, and baſk in the Sun. This Sobriety in Knowing, as I have already ſaid in ſome of the precedent Articles, has frequently eſcaped thoſe, who have treated of the ſeveral Branches of *Theology:* who ſeem to have made little account but of Subjects which were new, rare, and ſublime; and to have thought it a Diſparagement to their Profeſſion to let themſelves down to others. But, ſurely, they did not conſider, or, perhaps, even know, that the moſt uſeful and valuable Informations are not drawn from the ſublimeſt and moſt difficult Inſtances; any more than a graceful and eaſy Carriage, from climbing up a ſteep

and

and craggy Precipice, or dancing on the ſlack Rope.——Another Exception has been made to Profeſſors of Learning, in which the Inconveniencies they bring on themſelves have leſs ſhare, than thoſe by which they are accuſed of injuring Society. From a conſciouſneſs of real or ſuppoſed Superiority, they are ſaid to entertain a high Notion of themſelves, and to treat the reſt of Mankind as a ſort of inferior Beings, and to verify too much the *Apoſtle*'s Aſſertions * that *Knowledge puffs up, but Charity edifies.* The Conſequence of this is, a Prepoſſeſſion in favour of their own Opinions, a diſregard of thoſe who diſſent from them, and too much warmth both in maintaining the one, and refuting the other. A young Divine brings this behaviour from the College, where it is too often overlooked, into the World, where it is always diſagreeable. *Idem manebat, neque idem decebat.* Now, though you may meet with a great deal of this, both in your Academical Exerciſes, and in the ordinary Commerce of Life, your care muſt be never to return it, nor let yourſelf down to ſo de-

* 1 *Corinthians*, ch. 8.

grading

grading a Level. The Perſons, who are leaſt favourable to you, will not fail to take their advantage from ſo offenſive a weakneſs:

Hoc Ithacus velit, & magno mercentur Atridæ.

A little Reflexion on the Diſproportion of the things we know to thoſe we are ignorant of; on the darkneſs and limits of our Underſtnding; on our frequent Errors and Miſtakes, would correct this Fierceneſs in Debate, and that Self-Conceit, which is the Source of it. We ſhould ſatisfy thoſe we converſed with, that Steadineſs in defending our own Opinion may be very conſiſtent with the Deference we owe to that of others; and the Poſt of Truth be maintained without ſuch treacherous Auxiliaries as Bitterneſs and Paſſion *. We ſhall never bring over Others to our way of thinking by ſhowing a Contempt of theirs; becauſe ſuch Partiality deſtroys

* Bonus Altercator vitio iracundiæ careat. Nullus enim rationi magis obſtat affectus, & fert extra cauſam, & plerumque deformia convitia facere ac mereri cogit; & ipſos nonnunquam Judices irritat. Melior moderatio, ac nonnunquam etiam patientia. *Quint.*

all Confidence: And thoſe we converſe with, will never be at a loſs to apply to our reaſoning what we object to theirs. They will give us to underſtand, that if the Laws of humanity forbid us to ſtrike our Neighbour, how much more carefully ſhould we avoid wounding his Mind by a Contempt of his Opinions? Let us content ourſelves with explaining our own, and leave others at large to do the ſame. The proper Temper in ſuch Occurrencies ſeems to be expreſſed by *Livy* in the following Words, though ſpoke on a different Occaſion; *ne aut arrogans videare, aut obnoxius, quorum alterum eſt alienæ libertatis obliti, alterum ſuæ:* 'Avoid Arrogance and 'Obſequiouſneſs; by the former of which 'you treſpaſs on the Liberty of others, by 'the latter you give up your own.' It would be, indeed, the higheſt Indignity, if Mechanicks, and Day-Labourers ſhould have more Coolneſs and Moderation in their Debates, than Perſons ſtuck over with Aphoriſms and Scholarſhip: and that Men both uncultivated and vicious ſhould converſe and live together on more amicable Terms, than thoſe who are dignified with Titles which

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe and denote a ſuperior degree of Wiſdom. And when we reflect on the Evils and Scandals which have attended this Spirit, not only with reſpect to private Perſons, but to whole Societies, the Moderation I am ſpeaking of, recommends itſelf as the only Preſervative of that Agreement which Learning ſhould not violate but cement. Thus we ſhould provoke none by Cenſure, Contempt, or Envy: and though there always will, and ought to be an Emulation in the Liſts of Science, yet this would be calm and inoffenſive; not imbittered by that Contention and Rage, with which the Eager and the Proud ſupport their Tenets, and vex, defame, and perſecute one another in their ſtrife about them.

The Herd of Pedants may pronounce you a great Scholar for what you have read and retained of other Mens Writings: but, ſure, thoſe only are truly Intelligent, who live up to what they have learnt, to what themſelves profeſs, and preſcribe to others. This is that deeper Foundation than Knowledge itſelf, on which all Study muſt reſt; but which is never

never laid, where leſs account is made of what *ſhould* be thought and held, than of what *has* been ſaid and wrote. The latter Method may form Scholars to pore, and talk over their Books, but not to behave and live like Men of Senſe: That is, to be ſilent on what they are not acquainted with, and talk pertinently of what they know; *not to be unſeaſonable with their own Knowledge* *, and hearken to that of others with a patient and ſettled Spirit: to avoid Vanity and Indiſcretion, and, inſtead of unprofitable Speculations, to be converſant with the two moſt neceſſary and uſeful Arts of Life, *Self-denial* and *Self-conqueſt*.

I AM unwilling to advance any thing, which may ſeem a Reflexion on the Profeſſion of Learning, or the Perſons of the Learned. I honour the former, and ſhould eſteem it a happineſs to deſerve to be ranked with the latter: Yet Sincerity, no leſs than the deſire of giving a uſeful Caution obliges me to confeſs, that if the Singularities of ſeveral of the greateſt Men Letters have ever

* *Eccluſ.* ch. 32. *v.* 6.

formed,

formed, were put together, they would make a ſtronger Compoſition of Folly, than even the Blunders and Abſurdities of Perſons of the meaneſt Capacities. We have Inſtances of the Truth of this Aſſertion from the whimſical and ſtrained Allegories ſome Writers have imagined they found in the holy Scriptures: *Abbé Rance*'s Cenſure of the *Caſuiſts*, *Hardouin*'s Sentiment of the modern Date of ſeveral ancient Writers; *Plato*'s Notions of the Muſic of the Spheres, of the Myſteries contained in Numbers, his Origin of Names, are ſo many corroborating Evidences of it. And if *Fleury* had not been a Scholar, could he ever have imagined, that Converſation inſtead of being a relief and refreſhment to the Mind, heated and diſordered it? Nothing can be more judicious or deſerved than the Cenſure which *Le Clerc* and Dr. *Atterbury* have paſſed on *Huet*'s Treatiſe *of the weakneſs of human Underſtanding*; and yet the Author, no leſs celebrated for his Genius and Taſte, than profound Learning, had ſo high an Opinion of its Merit, as to give it to the Publick in two Languages.—— This Deviation from juſtneſs of Thought has not

not only ſurprized the Learned, in an unguarded Minute, and been of that kind of Defect which, by way of Foil, ſets off the luminous Parts of their Works, as in the above-cited Examples; But in ſome Authors (I hope the number is very ſmall) it has created a thick Miſt, which has wholly overſpread the Mind, from which it roſe, and only ſuffered Reaſon to break through, in order to diſcover, *not Light*, as the Poet ſays, *but Darkneſs viſible*. *Cardan*, amongſt all I am acquainted with, ſtands firſt in this Character, and is a mortifying Proof how much Folly and Learning, extent of Genius and abſolute want of common Senſe may meet in the ſame Perſon.—Such Inſtances as theſe are a ſeaſonable Check on that vanity which Knowledge is apt to give; and at the ſame Time, a Leſſon of the Circumſpection with which Writers ſhould produce themſelves to the Publick; and that as no Superiority of Parts exempts any Man from human Weakneſs, ſo it can never be a reaſonable Argument to juſtfy or adopt all his Opinions.

WHERE Application to Learning makes theſe Leſſons be overlooked; or where the Reſult of it is, to live in open Violation of them, the Title to Scholarſhip becomes a Diſgrace, and Men of true Judgment would eſteem it a Happineſs not to be learned on ſuch Terms. And though no Obſervation may ſeem more plain and obvious than this, I am afraid it is as ſeldom attended to in Practice, as if it was a private Diſcovery, communicated to a few Perſons, but hid from the Publick. On this account, therefore, you muſt allow me to inforce it, by the regard you bear to the credit of the Republic of Letters, and, in particular, of that excellent School, in which you are initiated; to the decency you owe your own Character, to the rights of civil and ſocial Life; and, above all, to the aſſiſtance Mankind is intitled to expect from thoſe who are to be * *the ſalt of the Earth, and the light of the World*; and, having *inſtructed others in Righteouſneſs, are to ſhine like Stars for all Eternity.*

* *Matthew*, ch. 5. & *Daniel*, ch. 12.

I HAVE

I HAVE now complied with your Deſire, and my Promiſe, of giving you my Thoughts on the ſeveral Branches of ſacred Science, and endeavoured to trace the Idea of a complete *Theology* and the Model of a perfect *Divine*.——In doing this, I have given the Public (if the Public can intereſt itſelf in any thing ſo inconſiderable as the Author of this Diſſertation) a Pledge of what it has a right to expect from one, who acknowledges the Obligations which the Character of a Divine brings on all thoſe who are honoured with it *.——My Deſign was, not to put down every thing which might be ſaid on this Matter, but what chiefly ſuited with your Situation, as one juſt initiated in that School. † Beſides, unleſs Directions of this kind are not only full and clear, but ſhort alſo, they

* Contendo denique atque nitor, ut habeat hoc à me RESPUBLICA cùm boni & amantis Civis Sacerdotiſque officium, tum teſtimonium meæ perpetuæ ſententiæ, et in SE voluntatis. *Sadolet.*

† Adde, quòd Diſciplinæ breviter ac purè oſtenſæ acumen, judicium, prudentiam, communium rerum uſum adjuvant: longa earum tractatio retundit vim mentis, & moleſtiſſima eſt. *Vivés, de tradendis Diſciplinis*, L. 2.

ceaſe to be a Plan, and become, with a very uſeleſs Impropriety, the Work itſelf. Such a Brevity, however, is underſtood, as does not conſtrain, but confine to due Bounds; and which leaves no Part either obſcure or defective, but gives light and vigour to the Whole. I began the Undertaking (to borrow a Figure from *Longinus)* by reviewing the Forces of my Subject, and culling out the Flower of them; that ſo, none might be placed amongſt what I intended as a ſelect Body, but thoſe which had ſtrength and aptitude to anſwer that End.

BEFORE I conclude, I muſt reſume the ſame Obſervation with which I began this Diſcourſe, that all *Eccleſiaſtical Knowledge* conſiſts in the *Scriptures*, the *Fathers*, *Church Hiſtory*, and *Theology:* I muſt reſume it, I ſay, in order to make you remark the Agreement of theſe ſeveral Parts with each other, as well as the joint Force and full reſult of them all together.——The *Scriptures*, which are the Fountain of all the reſt, are *the Rule* and *Law* given by God, concerning what we are to believe, hope, and love. The *Writings*

*of*

*of the Fathers*, and other Men of learning and piety, explain, apply, and inforce *this Law*. The *Church Hiſtorians* inform us of the various Revolutions which have happened to Mankind, with reſpect to the Cardinal Point of their happineſs or miſery, their obſervance or violation of *this Law*. The *Lives of the Saints* are ſo many animated *Copies* of it, * *not wrote with Ink on Paper, but ingraved by the Spirit of God on the living Tablets of Mens hearts and actions*. *Theology*, whether *Poſitive* or *Scholaſtic*, is human Reaſon directed by the Authority of this *Law*, and its legal Expoſitors, in the ſearch of all Moral and Divine Truths. *Caſuiſtry* and the *Canon Law* are a Detail of its ſeveral Precepts, and an Application of them to human Actions; and, like faithful Guardians, provide againſt the Incroachments of preſcription, cuſtom, and abuſes, which would infringe or weaken it. In fine, *Controverſy*, like † *the Tower of David, hung round with a thouſand Shields, all Armour of the Mighty,*

* 2 *Corinthians*, ch. 3.

† *Solomon's Song*, ch. 4. *v.* 4.

is a Bulwark againſt all ſiniſter Interpretations, all Miſtakes and Errors, which might corrupt or endanger its Integrity.

THUS, as you perceive, the *Scriptures* are the Soul of all *Eccleſiaſtical Learning*, and the other Branches of it are ſo many *co-exiſtent Parts*, which have a mutual dependence on each other, and form a *Whole*. Their Connexion and Relation is as natural and eaſy as it is neceſſary. Art ſeems to have done no more than join them together, and work them into that divine and admirable Syſtem we call *Divinity*.

BUT the uſe and intent of this Science reaches beyond mere information, and was deſigned by * *the Word of God, who is the Source of Wiſdom on high*, to be the Rule of our affections and manners, much more than the Object of our Knowledge. † *If we know theſe things*, ſays he, *we ſhall be bleſſed if we fulfil them*. The ultimate End, to which

* *Eccleſiaſticus*, ch. 1. *v.* 5.

† *John*, ch. 13. *v.* 17.

all Learning, but more eſpecially divine, is to be referred, is the * *Love of God, which is the Fulneſs of the Law.* And the weighty terms in which the Almighty Lawgiver enjoins this Obligation, ſhould be engraved in the Mind of every one who deſerves the name of a Divine. † *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might; and theſe words which I command thee this Day, ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt think of them when thou ſitteſt in thy Houſe, when thou walkeſt in the way, when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. And thou ſhalt bind them as a Sign upon thy Hand, and they ſhall be as Frontlets between thy Eyes. And thou ſhalt write them upon the Poſts of thy Houſe, and on thy Gates.*

All that now remains is, that we aſk of Him ‡ *Who is the brightneſs of eternal Light, the ſpotleſs Mirror of the Majeſty of God, and the Image of his goodneſs*; and who came into the World to impart to Men § *thoſe hidden Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, which are*

* *Rom.* ch. 13. † *Deut.* ch. 6. ‡ *Wiſd.* c. 7. § *Col.* 2. 3.

*all*

*all in him*, and to enkindle in them * *the Charity, which is above all Science*, that he would be pleaſed to light up in our breaſt that holy Flame, which never burns ſo ſteadily, as when an enlightened Underſtanding is united with a pure Heart.

* *Epheſians*, 3.

The E N D.